# Knowing China Kritik

### Note

There are some important similarities between this argument and the Security Kritik. Certainly you can read the link cards in this file as links to the Security K. They’ve been put out as separate files, however, because it’s possible to make only knowing China or China threat construction arguments without broader claims about securitization in general. This is especially useful if the negative wishes to advance a number of other impacts that securitize (but do not claim to know China).

The negative’s argument in that case would be that Aff claims to predict and interpret China create a distancing effect between the two countries, turning the case and externally causing war.

While some of the Aff answers apply to each, it is certainly possible that securitization in other areas (disease or the environment or terrorism) might be correct, while claiming to understand China or categorizing China as a threat could have independent negative effects on the relationship.

## 1NC

### 1NC — Knowing China Critique

#### [THE FIRST/NEXT OFF-CASE POSITION IS THE KNOWING CHINA CRITIQUE]

#### First, the aff attempts to “know” China via a detached and orderly analysis. This reduces a complex and nuanced society to a specimen that can be clinically observed and analyzed from afar. This conception of China as *knowable* actively constructs a self-other dichotomy that renders critical reflection impossible and creates a self-fulfilling prophecy of conflict.

Pan 4 — Chengxin Pan, Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University, 2004 (“The "China Threat" in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Volume 29, Issue 3, June/July, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Premier, p. 305-306)

While U.S. China scholars argue fiercely over "what China precisely is," their debates have been underpinned by some common ground, especially in terms of a positivist epistemology. Firstly, they believe that China is ultimately a knowable object, whose reality can be, and ought to be, empirically revealed by scientific means. For example, after expressing his dissatisfaction with often conflicting Western perceptions of China, David M. Lampton, former president of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, suggests that "it is time to step back and look at where China is today, where it might be going, and what consequences that direction will hold for the rest of the world."2 Like many other China scholars, Lampton views his object of study as essentially "something we can stand back from and observe with clinical detachment."3

Secondly, associated with the first assumption, it is commonly believed that China scholars merely serve as "disinterested observers" [end page 305] and that their studies of China are neutral, passive descriptions of reality. And thirdly, in pondering whether China poses a threat or offers an opportunity to the United States, they rarely raise the question of "what the United States is." That is, the meaning of the United States is believed to be certain and beyond doubt.

I do not dismiss altogether the conventional ways of debating China. It is not the purpose of this article to venture my own "observation" of "where China is today," nor to join the "containment" versus "engagement" debate per se. Rather, I want to contribute to a novel dimension of the China debate by questioning the seemingly unproblematic assumptions shared by most China scholars in the mainstream IR community in the United States. To perform this task, I will focus attention on a particularly significant component of the China debate; namely, the "China threat" literature.

More specifically, I want to argue that U.S. conceptions of China as a threatening other are always intrinsically linked to how U.S. policymakers/mainstream China specialists see themselves (as representatives of the indispensable, security-conscious nation, for example). As such, they are not value-free, objective descriptions of an independent, preexisting Chinese reality out there, but are better understood as a kind of normative, meaning-giving practice that often legitimates power politics in U.S.-China relations and helps transform the "China threat" into social reality. In other words, it is self-fulfilling in practice, and is always part of the "China threat" problem it purports merely to describe. In doing so, I seek to bring to the fore two interconnected themes of self/other constructions and of theory as practice inherent in the "China threat" literature—themes that have been overridden and rendered largely invisible by those common positivist assumptions.

#### Second, their discourse creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. War is unlikely unless we embrace these representations.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“The ‘China threat’: a self-fulfilling prophecy,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 105-107)

The ‘China Threat’ Paradigm as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

If changing Chinese public opinion and Beijing's growing assertiveness in foreign policy are better understood in the context of mutual responsiveness, then threatening as they may appear, they at least partly reflect the self-fulfilling effect of the China threat theory as practice. That is, they are to some extent socially constructed by Western representations of the China threat. At this juncture, we may return to the question raised earlier—What's the cost of having an enemy? The cost, simply put, is that perceiving China as a threat and acting upon that perception help bring that feared China threat closer to reality. Though not an objective description of China, the 'China threat' paradigm is no mere fantasy, as it has the constitutive power to make its prediction come true. If this China paradigm ends up bearing some resemblance to Chinese reality, it is because the reality is itself partly constituted by it. With US strategic planners continuing to operate on the basis of the China threat, this self-fulfilling process has persisted to the present day. For example, in July 2010, when China objected to the joint US- South Korean navy exercise in the Yellow Sea to no avail, it announced that its navy would conduct live fire drills in the East China Sea for the duration of the US-South Korean manoeuvres. 329 Meanwhile. a Global Times (a Chinese daily tabloid affiliated with the official People’s Daily) editorial opines that 'Whatever harm the US military manoeuvre may have inflicted upon the mind of the Chinese, the United States will have to pay for it, sooner or later'. 130

All such Chinese 'belligerence' seems to have provided fresh evidence to the 'China threat' paradigm, whose image of China has now been vindicated. 131 Without acknowledging their own role in the production of the 'China threat', 'China threat' analysts thus play a key part in a spiral model [end page 105] of tit-for-tat in Sino-US relations. Mindful of this danger, some cool-headed observers have warned that a US attempt to build a missile defence shield could be reciprocated by China deploying more missiles. Even the highly classified US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report Foreign Responses to U.S. National Missile Defense Deployment has hinted at this possibility. 133 In early 2006, Mike Moore, contributing editor of The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, predicted that if the US continues to weaponise space by deploying a comprehensive space-control system, 'China will surely respond’.134 And respond it did. In early 2007, it launched a ballistic missile to destroy an inoperational weather satellite in orbit. That test immediately caused a stir in the international press, even though it came after Washington's repeated refusal to negotiate with China and Russia over their proposed ban on space weapons and the use of force against satellites. A Financial Times article noted that 'What is surprising about the Chinese test is that anyone was surprised'.135 In a similar vein but commenting on the broader pattern of US strategy on China over the years, Lampton notes that 'Washington cannot simply seek to strengthen ties with India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and central Asian states as an explicit offset to rising Chinese power and then be surprised when Beijing plays the same game'.136

Nevertheless, such surprise is commonplace in the China watching community, reflecting an intellectual blindness to the self-fulfilling nature of one of its time-honoured paradigms. This blindness, in turn, allows the justification of more containment or hedging. In this way, the 'China threat' paradigm is not only self-fulfilling in practice, but also self-productive and self-perpetuating as a powerful mode of representation.

One might take comfort in the fact that neither Beijing nor Washington actually wants a direct military confrontation. But that is beside the point, for the lack of aggressive intention alone is no proven safe barrier to war. As in the cases of the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the outbreak of war does not necessarily require the intention to go to war. 137 Mutual suspicion, as US President Theodore Roosevelt once observed of the Kaiser and the English, is often all that is needed to set in motion a downward spiral.133 And thanks to the 'China threat' paradigm and its mirror image and practice from China, mutual suspicion and distrust has not been in short supply. 139 A war between these two great powers is not inevitable or even probable; the door for mutual engagement and cooperation remains wide open. Nevertheless, blind to its own self-fulfilling consequences, the 'China threat' paradigm, if left unexamined and unchecked, would make cooperation more difficult and conflict more likely.

It is worth adding that my treatment of Chinese nationalism and realpolitik thinking is not to downplay their potentially dangerous consequences, much less to justify them. Quite the contrary, for all the apparent legitimacy of [end page 106] reciprocal counter-violence or counter-hedging, Chinese mimicry is dangerous, as it would feed into this tit-for-tat vicious cycle and play its part in the escalation of a security dilemma between the US and China. Thus, to emphasise Chinese responsiveness is not to deny Chinese agency or exonerate its responsibility. While the general nature of Chinese foreign policy may be responsive with regard to the US, its 'contents' are not simply passive, innocent mimicry of US thinking and behaviour, but inevitably come with some 'Chinese characteristics'. That said, those 'Chinese characteristics' notwithstanding, there is no pregiven China threat both unresponsive to and immune from any external stimulus. To argue otherwise is to deny an important dimension of Chinese agency, namely, their response-ability.

By examining the self-fulfilling tendency of the 'China threat' paradigm, we can better understand that Sino-American relations, like international relations in general, are mutually responsive and constitutive. Thus, both China and the US should be held accountable to the bilateral relationship of their mutual making. To the extent that this 'China threat' knowledge often denies such mutuality, and by extension, US responsibility in the rise of the China threat, it is all the more imperative to lay bare its intrinsic link with power practice.

#### Third, the alternative is to give up attempts to know China. This requires abandoning the search for objective knowledge about China in favor of critical analysis of representations and discourse. This is a better methodology and framework.

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Among the most reported stories in the first decade of the twenty-first century, topping the list was not the global financial crisis, the long-running Iraq War, or even the 'September 11' terrorist attacks—it was the rise of China.1 These findings, announced by Global Language Monitor in 2011, were based on a study of global media reporting trends among 75000 print and electronic media sources. Were there a similar survey on the issues concerning the international scholarly community, China's rise would almost certainly rank among the most closely scrutinised as well. Long gone, it seems, are the days when an American publishing company did not publish a single book on China for fifteen years.2 With such extensive coverage on China's ascendancy today, there seems hardly a need for yet another study on this subject. Existing commentaries, books, and articles must have already covered a sufficiently wide range of perspectives.

Despite or precisely because of the vast amount of literature on this issue, I feel compelled to join the chorus. However, in doing so this book does not, as do many other books, seek to examine whether China is rising or not, or what its rise means. This is not because I believe such questions are unimportant or have already been settled; I do not. Rather, I believe what China's rise means cannot be independently assessed in isolation from what we already mean by China's rise. Though tautological it might sound, the latter question draws attention to the meaning-giving subject of China watchers. It turns the spotlight on our thoughts and representations of China's rise, which constitutes the main focus of this book.

Though it may appear that way in the eyes of some, going along this path is not a cunning attempt of finding a literary niche in an increasingly crowded field to score some cheap points all the while dodging the heavy lifting of tackling complex 'real-world' issues surrounding China. Nor is it to deliberately court controversy or strike an affected pose of malaise about an otherwise vibrant field of study. To me, this book is a necessary move justified on both theoretical and practical grounds. Theoretically, the book rejects the prevalent assumption about the dichotomy between reality and representation. Contra positivism, we cannot bypass thoughts and representations to come into direct contact with China as it is. What we see as 'China' cannot be detached from various discourses and representations of it. Works that purport to study China's rise, as if it were a transparent and empirically observable phenomenon out there, are always already inextricably enmeshed [end page vii] in representations. In all likelihood, those works will then become themselves part of such representations, through which still later studies will gaze at 'China'. In this sense, my focus on representation is less an expedient choice than ontological and epistemological necessity.

On practical grounds, given the inescapable immanence of representation and discourse in the social realm, a proper study of discursive representation is not a retreat from the real world but a genuine engagement with it in the full sense of the words. Perhaps with the exception of sleepwalking or unconscious twitching, no human action (let alone social action) can do without thought and representation. Constructivists are right in saying that words have consequences. But we may add that all social domains and human relationships are mediated through and constituted by thought and representation. China's relationship with the West is certainly no exception. With regional stability, prosperity and even world peace at stake, there is now an urgent, practical need to understand how the various strains of representation and discourse pervade and condition this critical and complex relationship.

For these reasons, this book turns to Western representations of China's rise. In particular, it focuses on two influential paradigms: the 'China threat' and the 'China opportunity'. Commonly held by their respective exponents as objective truth about the implications of China's rise, both paradigms, despite their seemingly contrasting views, are reflections of a certain Western self-imagination and its quest for certainty and identity in an inherently dynamic, volatile and uncertain world. While understandable, such a desire often proves elusive in the social world. With no lasting law-like certainty in sight, the desire for certainty then often comes full circle to two subsets of desire: namely, fears and fantasies. For these forms of desire can provide some emotional substitutes for the holy grail of certainty and truth. In this book, I will argue that the two China paradigms are, respectively, discursive embodiments of these two popular types of emotional substitutes. As such, they are not objective China knowledge, but are closely linked to habitual Western self-imagination and power practice. By probing into the interrelationship between knowledge, desire and power, the book aims to deconstruct contemporary Western representations of China's rise. Although it will tentatively point to some methodological openings for what one might call 'critical China watching', due to its scope and ontological stance as well as limits of space, it promises no ready-made alternative toolkit through which to better understand China as it is. Alas, the 'China as it is' simply does not exist except in our ingrained desire and conventional imagination.

## 2NC/1NR — Links

### Link — “China Threat”

#### “China Threat” representations are rooted in fear and fantasy, not objective reality.

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In The Geopolitics of Emotion (2009), the French author Dominique Moïse describes how the world is being shaped and transformed by a host of emotions: fear, humiliation and hope, to name but a few. While the world has always been emotion-laden, the geopolitics of emotion has been particularly on vivid display in the twenty-first century. Climate change, the ‘September 11’ attacks, the lingering global financial crisis, the perceived unstoppable power shift from West to East, refugee and humanitarian crises, ethnic conflict and popular uprisings have together brought into sharp relief a mixture of anxiety, anger, frustration, disillusionment, hatred and fear in many parts of the globe. In the West in general, and the US in particular, a key source of anxiety has been China’s seemingly relentless rise. There is now ‘a cauldron of anxiety’ about this emerging giant, former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick proclaimed in 2005.

To many Western observers, this fear, based on objective knowledge of China’s rise, is warranted. As an authoritarian state with the world’s fastest growing economy and one of the largest military forces, China seems to be nothing but a frightening giant on the horizon. Clearly, one cannot deny China’s vast size, enormous economic power and military potential. But the fact that the almost equally impressive rise of India has not attracted the same level of anxiety is revealing. If anything, India has been embraced with much enthusiasm and affection of late. In this sense, ‘objective’ knowledge, empirically grounded though it may seem, is nevertheless inseparable from emotion and desire. One might even say that what we know is often what we want to know. Thus, a significant portion of Western knowledge on China, gained apparently through the respected intellectual activity of China watching, has less to do with China and more with Western desire (a subject which has thus far attracted little attention).

The familiar ‘China threat’ argument, for instance, is not so much an objectively verified fact as it is a fear-inspired speculation disguised as ‘knowledge’. To substitute for the lack of positive certainty about China’s trajectory, this knowledge is produced through fear, which helps provide a negative form of certainty, namely, threat. During the Cold War, an Australian China observer commented that ‘What we do not know we fear’. That habit did not disappear with the end of the Cold War. Today, the Australian government vows to boost its China literacy in the Asian Century, but all the while it is acutely wary of China’s intention and military might, citing the usual reason that China is not yet transparent. Sharing this China anxiety with US policy-makers, Canberra has recently beefed up its military ties with Washington, as exemplified by allowing 2 500 US marines to train in Darwin and passing the US-Australian Defence Trade Treaty.

There is nothing wrong with feeling anxious about China. After all, the Chinese themselves may have been caught by surprise by the speed of their country’s ascendancy on the world stage, and many are grappling with the meanings and implications of China’s new global role. Meanwhile, aware of unease felt by neighbouring countries, the Chinese leadership has tried to reassure the rest of the world that China’s rise will be peaceful. Yet, this ‘reassurance’ policy has done little to ease that fear, for the latter has become interwoven with the expert knowledge of the ‘China threat’ offered by some quarters of the China watching community. This fear-induced China knowledge, now compounded by the widespread anxiety about impending US/Western decline, has in part given impetus to the Obama administration’s ‘Rebalancing’ to Asia. Although the US constantly denies that this strategic move aims at containing China, its unease with Beijing’s perceived growing clout has been at least one of its main driving forces. Interestingly but not surprisingly, despite their belonging to the opposite sides of the American partisan politics, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Republican Presidential nominee Mitt Romney both share this latent fear about America’s future as well as China’s ambition. Neither wants to see the widely anticipated Asian (Pacific) Century become a Chinese, rather than American, century.

Herein lies America’s new geopolitics of fear, following the decade-long ‘War on Terror’. But as the focus of this new geopolitical game turns to China and the Asia Pacific at large, fear is not the only emotion at play. Fantasy, as it may be called, is another, and perhaps even more enduring, emotional underpinning of the US’s Asia Pacific strategy.

From the American business community’s ‘Bridge the Pacific’ campaign in the late nineteenth century through Ronald Reagan’s ‘America is a Pacific nation’ declaration to Bill Clinton’s ‘Pacific Century’ statement, the Pacific has long been envisaged as an American Lake and a new frontier in the US’s ‘manifest destiny’ to lead the world from darkness to light. At the heart of Oriental darkness has been China, marked by its backward civilisation, despotic political system, and deplorable human rights records. Therefore, the dream of transforming the Oriental Other in American image has run deeply through US China-engagement policy ever since the missionaries’ ‘Christ for China’ campaign, business executives’ ‘Oil for the lamps of China’ slogan, and more recently, the ‘constructive engagement’ policies of the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. Considering that modern China studies and, by extension, contemporary China watching, owe much to the missionary writings on China, it is clear that fantasy or a desire to see ‘a huge country with an ancient civilization transforming herself into a modern, democratic, Christian nation and following the lead of the United States’ has been part and parcel of contemporary China research agenda, although the terminology has been changed from religious conversion of China to economic and institutional integration as well as normative socialisation.

Despite the intellectual, commercial and strategic efforts of engaging China, America’s China dream, now as then, proves to be elusive. As a result, a large part of the China fantasy has turned into disillusionment and even fear. In this context, the US’s ‘Rebalancing’ to Asia and its hedging against China represent a new and more sophisticated manifestation of the geopolitics of fear and fantasy. While no doubt many China observers are busy observing the fascinating new geopolitical manoeuvring in the Asia Pacific, they could do well to also critically observe the role of their China knowledge – strongly coloured by fear and fantasy – in the making of this strategic shift that is likely to profoundly shape global politics in the coming decades.

#### “China Threat” discourse creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. The alternative is crucial to break the cycle.

Pan 4 — Chengxin Pan, Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University, 2004 (“The "China Threat" in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Volume 29, Issue 3, June/July, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Premier, p. 325-326)

I have argued above that the "China threat" argument in mainstream U.S. IR literature is derived, primarily, from a discursive construction of otherness. This construction is predicated on a particular narcissistic understanding of the U.S. self and on a positivist- based realism, concerned with absolute certainty and security, a concern central to the dominant U.S. self-imaginary. Within these frameworks, it seems imperative that China be treated as a threatening, absolute other since it is unable to fit neatly into the U.S.-led evolutionary scheme or guarantee absolute security for the United States, so that U.S. power preponderance in the post-Cold War world can still be legitimated.

Not only does this reductionist representation come at the expense of understanding China as a dynamic, multifaceted country but it leads inevitably to a policy of containment that, in turn, tends to enhance the influence of realpolitik thinking, nationalist extremism, and hard-line stance in today's China. Even a small dose of the containment strategy is likely to have a highly dramatic impact on U.S.-China relations, as the 1995-1996 missile crisis and the 2001 spy-plane incident have vividly attested. In this respect, Chalmers Johnson is right when he suggests that "a policy of containment toward China implies the possibility of war, just as it did during the Cold War vis-a-vis the former Soviet Union. The balance of terror prevented war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but this may not work in the case of China."

For instance, as the United States presses ahead with a missile defence shield to "guarantee" its invulnerability from rather unlikely sources of missile attacks, it would be almost certain to intensify China's sense of vulnerability and compel it to expand its current small nuclear arsenal so as to maintain the efficiency of its limited deterrence. In consequence, it is not impossible that the two countries, and possibly the whole region, might be dragged into an escalating arms race that would eventually make war more likely.

Neither the United States nor China is likely to be keen on fighting the other. But as has been demonstrated, the "China threat" argument, for all its alleged desire for peace and security, tends to make war preparedness the most "realistic" option for both sides. At this juncture, worthy of note is an interesting comment made by Charlie Neuhauser, a leading CIA China specialist, [end page 325] on the Vietnam War, a war fought by the United States to contain the then-Communist "other." Neuhauser says, "Nobody wants it. We don't want it, Ho Chi Minh doesn't want it; it's simply a question of annoying the other side."94 And, as we know, in an unwanted war some fifty-eight thousand young people from the United States and an estimated two million Vietnamese men, women, and children lost their lives.

Therefore, to call for a halt to the vicious circle of theory as practice associated with the "China threat" literature, tinkering with the current positivist-dominated U.S. IR scholarship on China is no longer adequate. Rather, what is needed is to question this un-self-reflective scholarship itself, particularly its connections with the dominant way in which the United States and the West in general represent themselves and others via their positivist epistemology, so that alternative, more nuanced, and less dangerous ways of interpreting and debating China might become possible.

#### Their representations of China are a myth. The way we view China is not a product of objective study but rather of the way we view ourselves. All of the affirmative’s impact claims are false: they reflect how we feel about ourselves more than they describe an objective reality.

Pan 4 — Chengxin Pan, Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University, 2004 (“The "China Threat" in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Volume 29, Issue 3, June/July, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Premier, p. 310-314)

American Self-imagination and the Construction of Otherness In 1630, John Winthrop, governor of the British-settled Massachusetts Bay Colony, described the Puritan mission as a moral beacon [end page 310] for the world: "For wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies [eyes] of all people are uppon us."26 Couched in a highly metaphoric manner, the "city on the hill" message greatly galvanized the imagination of early European settlers in North America who had desperately needed some kind of certainty and assurance in the face of many initial difficulties and disappointments in the "New World." Surely there have been numerous U.S. constructions of "what we are," but this sense of "manifest destiny," discursively repeated and reconstructed time and again by leading U.S. politicians, social commentators, the popular press, and numerous school textbooks, has since become a pivotal part of U.S. self-consciousness. In 1992, Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote:

America is a remarkable nation. We are, as Abraham Lincoln told Congress in December 1862, a nation that "cannot escape history" because we are "the last best hope of earth." The president said that his administration and Congress held the "power and . . . responsibility" to ensure that the hope America promised would be fulfilled. Today . . . America is still the last best hope of earth, and we still hold the power and bear the responsibility for its remaining so.2''

This sentiment was echoed by Madeleine K. Albright, the former secretary of state, who once called the United States "the indispensable nation" and maintained that "we stand tall and hence see further than other nations."28 More recently, speaking of the U.S. role in the current war on terrorism. Vice President Dick Cheney said: "Only we can rally the world in a task of this complexity against an enemy so elusive and so resourceful. The United States and only the United States can see this effort through to victory."29 It is worth adding that Cheney, along with several other senior officials in the present Bush administration, is a founding member of the Project for the New American Century, a project designed to ensure U.S. security and global dominance in the twenty-first century.

Needless to say, the United States is not unique in ethnocentric thinking. For centuries, China had assumed it was the center of the world. But what distinguishes U.S. from Chinese ethnocentric self-identities is that while the latter was based largely on the Confucian legacy, the former is sanctioned by more powerful regimes of truth, such as Christianity and modern science. For the early English Puritans, America was part of a divine plan and the settlers were the Chosen People blessed by covenant with God. With the advent of the scientific age, U.S. exceptionalism began taking on a secular, scientific dimension. Charles Darwin once argued that "the [end page 311] wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection."3'

The United States has since been construed as the manifestation of the law of nature, with its ideas and institutions described not as historically particular but as truly universal. For example, in his second inaugural address in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson declared that U.S. principles were "not the principles of a province or of a single continent. We have known and boasted all along that they were the principles of a liberated mankind. " In short, "The US is Utopia achieved." It represents the "End of History."\*

What does this U.S. self-knowledge have to do with the way in which it comes to know others in general and China in particular? To put it simply, this self-knowledge is always a powerful analytical framework within which other societies are to be known. By envisioning a linear process of historical development with itself at its apex, the United States places other nations on a common evolutionary slope and sees them as inevitably traveling toward the end of history that is the United States. For example, as a vast, ancient nation on the other side of the Pacific, China is frequently taken as a mirror image of the U.S. self. As Michael Hunt points out,

we imagine ourselves locked in a special relationship with the Chinese, whose apparent moderation and pragmatism mirror our own most prized attributes and validate our own longings for a world made over in our own image. If China with its old and radically different culture can be won, where can we not prevail?

Yet, in a world of diversity, contingency, and unpredictability, which is irreducible to universal sameness or absolute certainty, this kind of U.S. knowledge of others often proves frustratingly elusive. In this context, rather than questioning the validity of their own universalist assumptions, the people of the United States believe that those who are different should be held responsible for the lack of universal sameness. Indeed, because "we" are universal, those who refuse or who are unable to become like "us" are no longer just "others," but are by definition the negation of universality, or the other. In this way, the other is always built into this universalized "American" self. Just as "Primitive . . . is a category, not an object, of Western thought," so the threat of the other is not some kind of "external reality" discovered by U.S. strategic analysts, but a ready-made category of thought within this particular way of U.S. self-imagination.

Consequently, there is always a need for the United States to find a specific other to fill into the totalized category of otherness. [end page 312] In the early days of American history, it was Europe, or the "Old World," that was invoked as its primary other, threatening to corrupt the "New World." Shortly after World War II, in the eyes of U.S. strategists, the Soviet Union emerged as a major deviance from, hence an archenemy of, their universal path toward progress via the free market and liberal democracy. And after the demise of the Soviet Union, the vacancy of other was to be filled by China, the "best candidate" the United States could find in the post-Cold War, unipolar world. Not until the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington had China's candidature been suspended, to be replaced by international terrorism in general and Saddam's Iraq in particular's

At first glance, as the "China threat" literature has told us, China seems to fall perfectly into the "threat" category, particularly given its growing power. However, China's power as such does not speak for itself in terms of an emerging threat. By any reasonable measure, China remains a largely poor country edged with only a sliver of affluence along its coastal areas. Nor is China's sheer size a self-evident confirmation of the "China threat" thesis, as other countries like India, Brazil, and Australia are almost as big as China. Instead, China as a "threat" has much to do with the particular mode of U.S. self-imagination. As Steve Chan notes:

China is an object of attention not only because of its huge size, ancient legacy, or current or projected relative national power. . . . The importance of China has to do with perceptions, especially those regarding the potential that Beijing will become an example, source, or model that contradicts Western liberalism as the reigning paradigm. In an era of supposed universalizing cosmopolitanism, China demonstrates the potency and persistence of nationalism, and embodies an alternative to Western and especially U.S. conceptions of democracy and capitalism. China is a reminder that history is not close to an end.

Certainly, I do not deny China's potential for strategic misbehavior in the global context, nor do I claim the "essential peacefulness" of Chinese culture." Having said that, my main point here is that there is no such thing as "Chinese reality" that can automatically speak for itself, for example, as a "threat." Rather, the "China threat" is essentially a specifically social meaning given to China by its U.S. observers, a meaning that cannot be disconnected from the dominant U.S. self-construction. Thus, to fully understand the U.S. "China threat" argument, it is essential to recognize its autobiographical nature. [end page 313]

Indeed, the construction of other is not only a product of U.S. self-imagination, but often a necessary foil to it. For example, by taking this particular representation of China as Chinese reality per se, those scholars are able to assert their self-identity as "mature," "rational" realists capable of knowing the "hard facts" of international politics, in distinction from those "idealists" whose views are said to be grounded more in "an article of faith" than in "historical experience."41 On the other hand, given that history is apparently not "progressively" linear, the invocation of a certain other not only helps explain away such historical uncertainties or "anomalies" and maintain the credibility of the allegedly universal path trodden by the United States, but also serves to highlight U.S. "indispensability." As Samuel Huntington puts it, "If being an American means being committed to the principles of liberty, democracy, individualism, and private property, and if there is no evil empire out there threatening those principles, what indeed does it mean to be an American, and what becomes of American national interests?" In this way, it seems that the constructions of the particular U.S. self and its other are always intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Some may suggest that there is nothing particularly wrong with this since psychologists generally agree that "individuals and groups define their identity by differentiating themselves from and placing themselves in opposition to others."^3 This is perhaps true. As the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure tells us, meaning itself depends on difference and differentiation. Yet, to understand the U.S. dichotomized constructions of self/other in this light is to normalize them and render them unproblematic, because it is also apparent that not all identity-defining practices necessarily perceive others in terms of either universal sameness or absolute otherness and that difference need not equate to threat.

### Link — “China Opportunity”

#### Their representations of China as a potential partner and opportunity for the West rest on a flawed self/other dichotomy. This attempt to “know” China is ethnocentric.

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Underpinning the ‘China opportunity’ paradigm are several assumptions about the relationship between the West and China. These assumptions, I will [end page 109] argue, are nothing less than false premises. One key false premise is the assumed self/Other dichotomy between the West/US and China, which are seen as two separate, more or less homogeneous entities. Just as the 'China threat' discourse reduces China to a threat, the 'China opportunity' literature reifies it as an opportunity. Whether that opportunity means markets, a place ripe for democracy, or a maturing global actor, all these imageries convey a sense of homogeneity. While China's internal differences are not ignored, they are often seen as insignificant. Even as analysts write about the schism between the Communist regime and the Chinese people,11 they often quickly describe the regime as fragile, illegitimate, or almost non-Chinese. In effect, China is again reduced to a homogeneous entity defined as a people longing for freedom and democracy, just like 'people anywhere else in the world'.12

Alongside the assumption of a monolithic China are some equally monolithic terms such as 'the West', 'the international community', or simply 'we' ('us'). For reasons of analytical convenience or stylistic neatness, we certainly cannot avoid such misleadingly singular terms as 'the West', 'the United States', and 'China' altogether. But very often we are led to believe in the naturalness of the terms we have invented. 'The West' is precisely such a term in the 'China opportunity' discourse. Thomas Paine once said that 'We have it in our power to begin the world all over again'. More recently, the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso declared that 'we [the European Union] are one of the most important, if not the most important, normative power in the world'.13 These examples testify to an enduring belief that the US and indeed the West are one, making up a unitary Western self, a transatlantic community, a civilisation, an alliance, an Enlightenment project, or a 'zone of democratic peace'. Certainly, some analysts will admit that tactically the West is not one. Robert Kagan famously wrote that 'Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus'.14 To Kagan, however, this rift is a lamentable anomaly in an otherwise unitary liberal democratic world which has lately come under a common threat.

Second, as noted in Chapter 3, the 'China opportunity' paradigm presupposes a binary, hierarchical placement of the Western self and the Chinese Other. In this temporal hierarchy, the Western self is placed at the apex of modernity or the end of History, thus occupying an active, dominant position as the modern subject. China, on the other hand, is considered a largely passive object in need of modernisation and democratisation, for it is in an inferior stage of social and political development. Seen this way, Sino-Western relations become a more or less one-way street of Western impact and Chinese response. This, for example, is precisely how an EU official described EU-China relations: 'Officially we call it "exchange of experience", but in reality we are exporting our model to China'.15 Similar attitudes are evident in the US. For example, it is argued that by sending the right [end page 110] 'signals' or setting 'the terms of engagement' or 'an outer boundary' for Chinese behaviour, Washington could succeed in 'shaping the character of China's growing ambition and channeling its increasing strength in benign directions'.16 On this basis, Johnston and Ross refer to the US as 'the subject of the study of engagement' while China is 'the object'. 17

Related to the above-mentioned premises, another 'China opportunity' assumption concerns the broad nature of Sino-Western relations. Seeing itself as a benevolent global hegemon and a 'force for good' in the world,18 the West considers its engagement with China a special relationship, characterised by Western altruism and generosity on the one hand and Chinese good will and gratitude felt for the West on the other. Historically, the relationship is believed to have been built on a series of good deeds by the West, who provided 'oil for the lamps of China', 'offered' China a stake in the interna- tional community, maintained regional stability whereby China could grow its economy, 'awarded' Beijing the 2008 Olympic Games-the list goes on. It was the US, once claimed Bill Clinton, that helped integrate China 'into the global economy', bring 'more prosperity to Chinese citizens', and facilitate 'the advance of personal freedom and human rights'.'9 Likewise, many US congressional members saw their approval of China's MFN status as, quite literally, a favour to the Chinese. At a workshop on Chinese foreign policy in Beijing in 2000, an American scholar, who later went on to become a senior official in the George W. Bush administration, challenged Chinese partici- pants to think of any country that had provided as much help to China in the twentieth century as had his own country.

Given these strongly held premises, the 'China opportunity' paradigm is not a descriptive account of what China is, but from the beginning a normative prescription of what China ought to be. Its dominant imageries about China, such as 'one billion customers', 'democratisation', and 'responsible stakeholder' are all part of some longstanding goals of transforming China in Western image. To many 'opportunity' proponents, those goals are not only realistic but also measurable. Pre-empting the potential criticism that the hope for China's democratisation is utopian, Kristol and Kagan ask rhetorically:

How utopian is it to work for the fall of the Communist Party oligarchy in China afier a far more powerful and, arguably, more stable such oligarchy fell in the So- viet Union? With democratic changes sweeping the world at an unprecedented rate over these past thirty years, is it "realistic" to insist that no further victories can be won?20

In this context, anticipating China's transformation and democratisation has become a burgeoning cottage industry. Here, scholars routinely seek to gauge whether China's 'learning', 'compliance', or 'convergence' is 'full' or [end page 111] 'partial', 'genuine' or 'tactical'. Whilst Johnston and Evans come up with a typology of a continuum of the quality of Chinese cooperation, others offer a linear 'spiral model' of norms socialisation to measure Beijing's progress. Reminiscent of W. W. Rostow's famous thesis about the universal stages of economic growth and modernisation, Ann Kent divides China's compliance with the international regimes into five stages of international and domestic compliance.21

Certainly, the 'opportunity' paradigm is right to highlight the social dimension of China and its potential for change. This is a fresh contrast to the realist treatment of China as a largely asocial, ahistorical actor destined to repeat the timeless pattern of international politics handed down from the past. The problem, however, is that while paying due attention to the 'responsiveness' of China, they seem to have taken a step too far by neglecting to put such 'responsiveness' in a mutual and reciprocal context. As a result, their constructivist perspective is largely ethnocentric, conjuring up a normatively unequal relationship of social construction in which the liberal West and its norms and institutions are taken as universally pregiven, rather than historically constructed and always potentially contested. The world, it seems, is essentially of 'our' creation. As a senior adviser to George W. Bush told the journalist and best-selling author Ron Suskind: 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create reality. And while you are studying that reality- judiciously, as you will-we'll act again creating new realities.... We're history's actors'.22

But that claim is part reality and part illusion. It is no doubt true that the West in general and the US in particular have profoundly shaped the landscape of international relations. Yet, given the mutual responsiveness of world politics, the Sino-Western relationship is not just of 'our' making, but also of mutual construction. It is an ongoing, complex social construct in a multitude of irreducibly intersubjective settings, where the rules of engagement are mutually and constantly (re)negotiated, rather than unilaterally set and exogenously determined from the civilised metropole. The 'opportunity' paradigm assumes China's convergence with 'us' which would lead to the eventual absorption of the China difference and Otherness. But it ignores the fact that difference is intrinsic and indispensable to any social relationship and even to the very being of human society itself. Universal sameness, if it is possible at all, would abolish the existence of meaningful social relations and lead to an absurd situation of total reciprocity and interchangeability, where 'the relationship with the other becomes impossible'. 23 Without doubt, state interests and identities are socially constructed by powerful discourses and shared values and norms, but if such norms are able to exert influence, that is precisely because they have been intersubjectively shared through a process of mutual responsiveness, rather [end page 112] than because of their intrinsic natural superiority across space and time. Having highlighted these false premises of the ‘China opportunity’ paradigm, I now turn to the question of why this paradigm is in practice false promises.

#### Their discourse of “China opportunity” is the flip side of the “China Threat” coin. It relies on the same self-other dichotomy.

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Consequently, for all their apparent differences, the 'threat' and 'opportunity' paradigms are the two sides of the same coin of Western knowledge, desire, and power in China watching. In essence, both are specific manifestations of a modem quest for certainty in an uncertain world. These seismic twins are not only similar in terms of their discursive functions of constructing self/Other, but they are also joined together in practice. They make up a powerful bifocal lens for China watching, a lens which can largely account for the emergence and popularity of the 'hedging' strategy towards China.

#### Their representations of China become justifications for perceiving China as a threat.

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The 'China opportunity' narrative, by contrast, tends to favour a policy of engagement. But as examined in Chapter 6, this paradigm and its associated engagement strategy are more often than not false promises. They are false in that their assumption of the West/US and China in terms of a temporal self/Other hierarchy allows their advocates to ignore or at least downplay China's inherent subjectivities and agency in this intersubjective relationship. To the extent that Sino-Western relations are intersubjective, socialisation does occur, but it takes place on a mutual basis, rather than as a one-way traffic. In this context, the promises of the 'China opportunity' become less certain and more problematic. Yet often oblivious to its own false premises, the paradigm instead blames China (and to a lesser extent, Western engagers) for its increasingly apparent 'China fantasy'. What is significant about this 'China opportunity' disillusionment is that it converges with the 'China threat' imagery and together justifies a tougher approach to a country which now not only appears unreceptive to our tutelage but also grows menacingly stronger by the day.

### Link — “China Rise” (Relative Power)

#### Representations of China’s “relative power” take the definition of power for granted.

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The Power-Shift Debate and the Literature on Power: A Case of Mutual Neglect

The now-familiar narrative on a power shift comprises a wide range of literature and centers on at least four concepts: whether there has been a power shift; how far-reaching this shift has been, and whether it can be slowed down or even reversed; in what areas (e.g., economic power, military power, or soft power) the [end page 388] shift is most evident; and what this shift means for great-power relations as well as how to best respond to it. In this vast literature, opinions have ranged, for example, from assertions that we are already in the “Chinese century” to claims that China still has a long way to go (Nye 2002; Chan 2008; Gurtov 2013), and from the “power transition” thesis that a more powerful China is more likely to challenge the international status quo (Tammen and Kugler 2006) to a more sanguine belief that socializing China into the international community is still possible (Steinfeld 2010).

Hotly debated as these power-shift questions are, what is missing is a more reflective analysis of the concept of power itself. As Shaun Breslin argues, in the study of China’s IR, “The concept of ‘power’ is often left undefined, with an assumption that size and importance is the same as power” (2007, 6). In a similar vein, Jeffrey Reeves and Ramon Pacheco Pardo note that “the study of modern Chinese power remains largely underdeveloped” (2013, 450). This conceptual underdevelopment is certainly not unique to the study of China. According to Martin Smith (2012, 1), IR analysts in general are often “more comfortable thinking and writing about who has power and what they do with it, rather than about the core issue of what it is.” There may be a good reason for this general unease. Though power is a central political concept in the study of IR, it has been widely recognized as notoriously “elusive,” “slippery,” “essentially contested,” and “most troublesome” (Keohane and Nye 2001, 1; Barnett and Duvall 2005, 2; Gilpin 1981, 13).

This conceptual minefield notwithstanding, some audacious efforts at theorizing power have been made. As demonstrated in many different typologies of power, social and political theorists as well as scholars from international political economy and constructivist perspectives have made some noteworthy contributions to our thinking about power. The introduction of the concept “soft power” by Joseph Nye (1990), for example, has generated a vibrant new research program in IR, including the subfield of Chinese IR (Li 2009). The division of power into coercive, normative, and remunerative power by sociologist Amitai Etzioni has been aptly applied to the study of Chinese power (Lampton 2008). In addition to the conventional understanding of power as [end page 389] resources or capabilities, scholars have added motivation, desire, and will to the mix, thereby helping differentiate actual power from potential power (Baldwin 1980; Strange 1996). Furthermore, informed by Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power as well as the “faces of power” debate (Dahl 1957; Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Lukes 2005), Barnett and Duvall (2005) and Guzzini (2013) have begun theorizing power from a constructivist perspective. To be sure, this theoretical debate on power is far from settled or completed, and my intention is not to engage directly with it. But the various efforts at theorizing and conceptualizing power have added more nuanced understandings to the question of what power is.

Surprisingly, however, these different understandings have been largely absent from the power-shift narrative. Indeed, the two bodies of literature are marked by conspicuous mutual neglect. Except at the most general level, few theorists of power seem interested in the current power-shift debate with the possible exception of Nye (2010). Meanwhile, few power-shift analysts pay close attention to what theorists have to say about the complexities of power in international relations. Even as the word “power” figures prominently in the titles of many publications on power shift, as a concept it rarely receives any in-depth discussion. True, in the debate there is “a shared understanding about what makes a state powerful” (Chan 2008, 2), but there has been no explicit self-reflection on this understanding.

#### Taking the definition of power for granted makes their arguments tautological. Challenging dominant discourses about power is needed to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Commonly agreed-upon statements in the argumentative international relations (IR) community are often hard to come by, but one exception is the view that the center of gravity in world politics is shifting away from where it used to be. The early twenty-first century, the argument goes, is witnessing a dramatic power shift from the West to the East, and from the United States to China in particular (Hoge 2004; Prestowitz 2005; Shambaugh 2005; Mahbubani 2008; White 2010). Yet amid such burgeoning discourses on a power shift, the dominant way of conceptualizing power has remained largely unchanged. While scholars in the debate often disagree on how to measure the changing distribution of power, they rarely question their state-centric, resource-based concept of power itself. Without critically examining the concept [end page 387] of power, the power-shift debate, no matter how sophisticated, will remain inadequate.

In this article I call for rethinking power by paying more attention to the complex and changing meanings of power. Given that China has received the lion’s share of attention in contemporary power-shift analysis, the focus of this rethinking is on Chinese power. Since the rapidly developing Chinese economy has most directly fueled the power-shift narrative, my study draws on some specific vignettes about Chinese economic power—for example, “Made in China,” “the China price,” and China’s “financial nuclear weapons.” My aim is not to arrive at some kind of general theory about Chinese power; rather, it is to draw attention to the insights offered by some existing critical power analyses in order to introduce necessary conceptual self-reflexivity into the power-shift debate.

I have divided this article into four parts. I begin with a discussion of the mutual neglect between the power-shift debate and the literature on the concept of power. Next, I provide an overview of a conception of power alternative to the state-centric, quantitative, and zero-sum understanding of power that has dominated the power-shift narrative. In the third section, I illustrate the contingency and socially constructed nature of “Chinese” economic power and what it means for the so-called US-China power shift. I conclude by calling for further interrogating our conventional ways of thinking about power. I argue that unless a new type of power discourse emerges, the United States and China, among other countries, will be hard pressed to build a new type of major power relationship.

#### We critique the conception of power underlying their scholarship about China’s rise.

#### 1. It’s state-centric.

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Rethinking “Power”

In this article, my main purpose is to offer a conceptual corrective to this neglect of explicit critical engagement with the concept of power in the power-shift literature. While there is no single alternative way of conceptualizing power, power may be rethought at least along the following dimensions. First, although the state does hold power, it is not a neatly bounded property coterminous with state boundaries. Rather, it has always been “exercised” by or through a diversity of actors, agents, and social structures alongside the state. Among them, for example, are consumers, investors, transnational corporations, credit rating agencies, markets, global supply chains, nongovernmental organizations, the media, the Internet, and even the ruled and the powerless. Such agents and structures often transcend national borders and are not necessarily beholden to state power. Nor can their power be readily mapped onto the state in which they happen to reside. All these considerations undermine “the possibility of seeing power as solely a spatial monopoly exercised by states” (Sassen 2006, 222). Thus, upon a closer look, the complex geographies of power in global politics defy a state-centric conception.

#### 2. It’s not zero-sum.

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Second, power is always relational and contextual (Barnett and Duvall 2005; Hagström 2005; Piven 2008; Guzzini 2013). As Guzzini (2013, 24) notes, “Any power instrument becomes a potential power resource only if its control is seen to be valued by [end page 392] other actors in the interaction. Power comes out of this relation, not from the power holder alone.” Relational and contextual power may be best understood not in terms of its quantifiable capabilities but within its specific social contexts. The “same amount” of capability may not translate into the same degree of power or achieve the same effect within different relationships or domains. With the acceleration of globalization and expansion of global production networks, even the state rarely stands still. As the state becomes more internationalized or globalized, its power may change in “quality” as well as quantity (Cox 1987; Agnew 2003, 78–79). As a consequence, “national” power is not only less receptive to objective measurement but is also less national in nature. Certainly this does not imply the end of the nation-state, nor is the world quite as flat as Thomas Friedman (2005) has famously asserted. Nevertheless, the national boundaries of power, if such things exist, are becoming more blurred and flattened. In short, it has become problematic to invoke the sharp-edged notions of national economy and state power—or, for that matter, the perceived congruence between the two.

If power has no independently verifiable quantity, then power relations are rarely zero-sum, unless they are imagined as such and acted upon accordingly. In reality, power takes on an interdependent dimension, which, among other things, means that “what some have lost, others have not gained” (Strange 1996, 14). Moreover, power cuts both ways, a phenomenon Anthony Giddens calls the “dialectic of control in social systems” (1986, 16; emphasis in original). This point holds true even in seemingly asymmetric relationships, such as those between landlords and tenants, state elites and voting publics, priests and their parishioners, and masters and slaves (Piven 2008). Given that power is not always neatly distributed in proportion to the distribution of capabilities, a shift in the latter may not necessarily mean a corresponding shift in the former.

Furthermore, a state’s relational power is not merely a reflection of its position in the distribution of capabilities across states (Waltz 1979); it also bears the imprint of global political economic structures. In this sense, a small country’s power against potential aggression may be greater than its defense capabilities might indicate, thanks to its intersubjectively recognized sovereignty [end page 393] in the international system. Meanwhile, with structurally derived relational power also comes structural vulnerability. As we know well in domestic politics, independent members who hold the balance of power in parliament gain power primarily because of their contingent structural position; by the same token, their power is susceptible to changes of that structure. Power in the international system is no exception.

#### 3. It’s socially constructed.

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Third, power is socially constructed. If “our idea of what belongs to the realm of reality is given for us in the language that we use” (Winch 1958, 15), power as a central phenomenon in reality must also owe its meaning and existence to how we conceptualize it. Thus, a fuller understanding of power needs to take seriously its normative and discursive constructions. In the eyes of many power transition theorists, a country’s power status is ontologically independent of ideational factors such as intentions and norms (even though these may be seen as relevant variables in states’ power behavior). Yet, as John Allen notes, power “as an outcome cannot and should not be ‘read off’ from a resource base” (2003, 5). Likewise, Guzzini (2013, 115) argues that “what counts as a power resource in the first place cannot be assessed ex ante independently from general norms, the actors’ particular value systems, and the specific historical context of the interaction.” In other words, power depends on its social recognition within a community (Ashley 1986). Consequently, in power analysis a focus on the (material) distribution of power is not enough (Hindess 1996); it must also, according to Barnett and Duvall, “include a consideration of the normative structures and discourses” (2005, 3).

If diverse discourses are at play in the construction of power, then “a considerable indeterminacy in the patterning of power” may result (Piven 2008, 4). Power indeterminacy has always been compounded by the evolving normative context in which power is constructed, legitimized, and exercised. Realists insist that country A with more material capabilities than country B has more control over the latter, but in reality a clear-cut correlation between capabilities and control is rare (Hoffmann 1967). Scholars, including some notable neorealists, acknowledge that military primacy does not always pay, at least not as much as is commonly [end page 394] assumed (Waltz 1979; Drezner 2013). At the root of this nonalignment between power as resources and power as effects are not just some power conversion problems, but more importantly the intrinsic factor of norms and discourses. By helping legitimize or delegitimize power, discourses construct as well as constrain power.

Given that power is contextual, relational, interdependent, non-zero-sum, and socially constructed, it is more than a property monopolized by the state, and its shift necessarily entails more than just a spatial shift between states. From this perspective, we need to rethink China’s rising power. Focusing on Chinese economic power, I examine in the next section how changes in Chinese power cannot be simply described in terms of China’s “rise” (and the West’s fall).

### Link — “China Democracy”

#### US representations of China are created to ensure that China is forced to conform to American values. These representations are not racially neutral — they assume US superiority to the non-white Other.

Turner 14 — Oliver Turner, Research Associate at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester, 2014 (“American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy” Rutledge, Available online via Google Books, Accessed 6-22-2016, SAA)

Across the duration of Sino-US relations, powerful societal images of China have always provided truths and realities about that country and its people within the United States. Warren Cohen is representative of much of the relevant literature when he describes the United States‘ historical relations with China as ‘schizophrenic', with ‘a pattern of alternating highs and lows‘.9 Certainly, American images of China have shifted quickly and dramatically in terms of their relative positivity and negativity at given moments. However, this book shows that they have also endured as more powerful underlying assumptions about China‘s identity across extended temporal periods. Moreover, and as the apparently irreconcilable Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan dichotomy demonstrates, China at any time has had the potential to exist in varying and seemingly contradictory ways. In the earliest years of Sino- American contact in the eighteenth century, for example, China was regularly idealized as a distant land of romance, mystery and exoticism. It was also imagined as a place of commercial and religious opportunity. The ‘backward’ customs Westerners encountered in China additionally ensured that Americans quickly regarded that country as fundamentally uncivilized. Particularly after non-White Chinese immigrants began entering the United States from the middle of the nineteenth century, it was deemed a threat to the foundations of White America. As will be shown, from these understandings emerged the respective identity constructions of Idealized, Opportunity, Uncivilized and Threatening China. It is argued that these constructions have remained especially stable and enduring across the duration of Sino-US relations. The presence of each within American imaginations has ebbed and flowed, but none has ever disappeared completely and each has retained the capacity for resurgence. This analysis also demonstrates that all American images of China, whether enduring or not, have been produced in part from understandings about the United States itself. The four key constructions of China identified above, however, have endured particularly prominently because they are rooted within some of the most intrinsic elements of American identity. Like those of Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan, their apparent contradictions are therefore nullified by shared roots in American identity. The fundamental logic each advances has remained, and, in many ways, they exist as vividly today as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The argument, then, is not that American images of China represent objective observations of that country and its people. It is that they have always been subjective constructions of American design. Neither do they merely constitute assessments of China‘s relative favorability (or other- wise) at given moments. They also exist as understandings of identity which have remained stable beneath comparatively superficial shifts of attitudes and opinion. This is best described with an example. As noted earlier, American imagery of China throughout much of the l980s was overtly positive in nature. This remained the case until the I989 ‘massacre’ in Tiananmen Square, which ensured a rapid and dramatic shift to more overtly negative American perceptions of China (see Chapter 5). However, the images which circulated around this time were in many ways continuations of those which had been advanced throughout the years, decades and even centuries beforehand. Specifically, it was considered that the violent suppression of an apparently Western-style movement for democratic and capitalist change was evidence that China remained beyond the imagined civilized world. Uncivilized China became a resurgent construction because it was understood that the country had once again failed to conform to American standards of civilization. Thus, while images of China had evolved to reflect new circumstances, for the most part they shifted within familiar boundaries of reference. This book also argues that societal American images of China have traditionally, and more broadly, provided the truth and reality that it exists as an inferior or unequal land and people. This has not been an historically uncontested or uniform understanding. Nonetheless, even today, while China is rarely explicitly referred to as inferior the expectation remains that it should conform to the superior values and characteristics of American identity, such as democracy and capitalism. It is shown that constructions of Idealized, Opportunity, Uncivilized and Threatening China have variously been inextricable from this understanding. It is also demonstrated that China's imagined inferiority, or unequal status, has frequently been articulated through racial discourse and imagery. The assertion is not that American society has ever been uniquely racist or xenophobic; it is that race has historically been an especially powerful site of identity construction from which images of a non-White China have been produced and reproduced in relation to a White United States. Along with presumptions of China‘s inferiority, the issue of race has been a more prominent idea at particular moments than at others. However, both have been active within the formulation of US China policy at numerable historical junctures, often alongside the four most stable and enduring constructions of China‘s identity outlined above.

### Link — “China Economy”

#### Fear of Chinese economic growth inspires China Threat Discourse.

Campion 16 — Andrew Stephen Campion, is the Head of Research at the Atlantic Council, UK. His work focuses on the construction of security threats with an emphasis on energy and China, 2016 (“The Geopolitics of Red Oil: Constructing the China Threat Through Energy Security” p. 2 (available online via Google Books), accessed 6/21/16 AEC) ES= energy security, CT = china threat SOS= security of supply

A recent Pew Research Center (a non-partisan think tank based in Washing- ton, DC) report gauged public opinion from countries around the globe about perceptions of Chinese versus US power. Its findings suggest that there is a significant percentage of people around the world who are convinced that “China [will] eventually replace the U .S. as the world’s leading superpower”, and that these feelings are especially acute in leading Westem countries.3 Although this report did not lend a qualitative assessment to these results about whether China’s growth over the US was welcome or not. the exploration of language surrounding China’s rise has suggested that many in the West are wary of Chinese growth. What I explore in this book is how perceptions of Chinese growth have crystalized into a palpable China Threat Discourse, and how this has become the defining image of China in U S geopolitical approaches. In par- ticular. I explore the issue of energy security (ES), as US has become central to nations" perceptions of their national security. As the threat from China and energy security are issues which receive frequent attention in academic and popular sources, anyone daring to add to this corpus of research must. have something original and useful (and ideally interesting) to say about them. I hope you will feel that I have accomplished this in this book.

## 2NC/1NR — Impacts

### Impact — Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

#### Their representations of China create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 148-149)

At the core of the Western self-imagination is the modern knowing subject. Implying the existence of a certain, objectively knowable world 'out there', this self-fashioning affords the West both the confidence and duty to know and lead that world. When certain knowledge about a particular 'object', as in the case of China, is stubbornly not forthcoming, the self-professed knowing subject then resorts to certain emotional substitutes such as fear and fantasy to make up for the absence of certainty. With fear, one may restore a sense of (negative) certainty about an existential threat 'out there', a threat which seems readily accounted for by the timeless wisdom of realism (and to some extent liberalism). Alternatively, with the subliminal aid of fantasy, the West can envisage an immensely soothing scenario of opportunity, engagement and convergence that carries with it a teleological predictability about how History begins, evolves, and ends.

Thanks to those emotional substitutes, the initial 'inscrutability' of China's Otherness gives way to more comprehensible imageries: it is now either an affront to, or an opportunity for, the Western self and its will to truth and power. Either way, it becomes a reassuring object of aversion and attraction that allows for continued Western self-posturing as the modem knowing subject. Indeed, as evidenced in the two dominant sets of China discourses, the Western self and its Chinese Other are mutually constitutive. [end page 148]

More importantly, such mutual constructions are from the outset linked to power and political practice. At one level, they are complicit in the political economies of fear and fantasy 'at home'. At another level, they are constitutive of foreign policy which in turn helps construct the Other in reality. Consequently, the China discourses turn out to be an integral and constitutive part of their 'object of study'. For example, as illustrated in Chapters 4-5, America's 'China threat' discourse both contributes to, and is reproduced by, the US partisan politics of fear and military Keynesianism. At the same time, this threat imagery helps sustain a containment policy of sorts. By provoking similar responses from China, such a policy ends up participating in the creation of the very threat it seeks to contain.

#### Flawed China threat representations guarantee policy failure. The China threat is used to justify biased policies toward China.

Turner 14 — Oliver Turner, Hallsworth Research Fellow, 2014 (“American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy”, Routledge Studies in US Foreign Policy, 16/4, accessed 22nd June, CE)

Across the duration of Sino-US relations, powerful societal images of China have always provided truths and realities about that country and its people within the United States. American images of China have always been central to the formulation, enactment and justification of US China policy in Washington. US China policy has always been active in the production and reproduction of imagery and in the reaffirmation of the identities of both China and the United States. With regard to the first argument, in Chapter 2 it was shown that contributors to both the ‘imagery’ and ‘policy’ literatures have most commonly explored American representations of China in broadly superficial terms. Those images have been conceived primarily, or even solely, as temporally specific attitudes and opinions of given moments in response to events ‘out there’. As a result, analyses have largely been restricted to assessments of their relative positivity or negativity at given moments. This was shown to be the primary weakness of the imagery literature. With regard to the second question, and again as outlined in Chapter 2, contributors have largely failed to examine the significance of American images of China to the enactment of US China policy. Where images and policy have been interrogated, authors have almost exclusively privileged material over ideational forces so that the latter is deemed to be of either secondary or no consequence. The result is that policy has been interrogated in the absence of concern for the extent to which representational processes actively create political possibilities while precluding others. 5 This was shown to be the primary weakness of the policy literature. With regard to the third question, Chapter 2 showed that US China policy has been understood to represent the observable actions, or a ‘bridge’, of one given actor towards another. 6 The possibility that it functions within the production of imagery, and in the construction of China’s identity as well as that of the United States, has been almost entirely overlooked. To reaffirm, the conclusions of this book are aimed primarily – though not exclusively – at the policy literature. This is because the majority of contributors to the imagery literature (as historians, area specialists, etc.) have rarely and understandably concerned themselves with explorations of US China policy. A corresponding neglect for imagery throughout the policy literature, however, is considered a weakness in need of more urgent attention because it exposes a salient knowledge gap in how US China policies are enabled. The purpose of this final chapter is to bring together and review the principal findings of each of those which precede it. It does this by revisiting the most powerful societal images of China identified and explored, the role they have played in the advancement of US China policy over time, and the importance of that policy itself in the reproduction of imagery. Ultimately, the aim is to clarify the central messages articulated throughout the book and conclude with some final thoughts on their applicability to twenty-first-century Sino-US relations.

### Impact — Aggressive US Foreign Policy

#### The "China Threat” is a social construction used to defend aggressive US foreign policy.

Turner 13 — Oliver Turner, Research Associate at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester. He is the author of American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy (Routledge, forthcoming). He is interested in US foreign policy especially with regards newly influential global actors, as well as how American-led power steers the dynamics and future of the developing world, 2013 (“‘Threatening’ China and US security: the international politics of identity” British International Studies Association, p. 902, accessed 6/24/16, AEC)

Abstract. China’s increasing capabilities are a central focus of modern day US security concerns. The International Relations literature is a key forum for analyses of the so-called ‘China threat’ and yet it remains relatively quiet on the role of ideas in the construction and perpetuation of the dangers that country is understood to present. This article reveals that throughout history ‘threats’ from China towards the United States, rather than objectively verifiable phenomena, have always been social constructions of American design and thus more than calculations of material forces. Specifically, it argues that powerful and pervasive American representations of China have been repeatedly and purposefully responsible for creating a threatening identity. It also demonstrates that these representations have enabled and justified US China policies which themselves have reaffirmed the identities of both China and the United States, protect- ing the latter when seemingly threatened by the former. Three case studies from across the full duration of Sino-American relations expose the centrality of ideas to historical and contemporary understandings of China ‘threats’, and to the American foreign policies formulated in response.

**US China threat representations inevitably cause military confrontation**

**Turner 13** — Oliver Turner, Hallsworth Research Fellow, 2013 (“‘Threatening’ China and US security: the international politics of identity”, Review of international studies, 08 February, http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=9021309&jid=RIS&volumeId=39&issueId=04&aid=9021307&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=, accessed 22nd June, CE)

The standard Chinese articles first analyse the offending discourse in terms of military, economic and cultural threats, and then refute these China threat fallacies with counter-arguments.24 Rather than a bellicose great power, **China is a developing country with a long history as a peace-loving nation.** Rather than using Western international relations theory to understand China's rise in terms of the violent rise and fall of great powers in Europe, we are told that China's success needs to be understood in the context of the peace and stability of the East Asian world order. **Hence, the Chinese articles state that 'China threat theory' is the fabrication of Westerners who are clinging to 'Cold War thinking' in a post-Cold War world. They tell us that Americans need to recognise the error of their 'enemy deprivation syndrome' that created a China threat to replace the Soviet threat. Those who see China as a potential threat thus are making both empirical and theoretical errors,** according to Chinese responses.25 **Chinese texts thus conclude that the problem is not China's rise, but how China threat discourse puts obstacles in its way: texts that tarnish China's image risk alienating both China's neighbouring countries and foreign investors.** Hence **correcting the fallacy of China threat theory is part of the greater project of how to understand China correctly**. The solution to the problem of China threat is to understand China differently: in 1999 Chinese premier Zhu Rongji told Americans that they need to think of China as an opportunity.26 Critical discussions of 'China threat theory' argue that China's vociferous rebuttalis a predictable and understandable outgrowth of the Chinese people's frustration with the West's demonisation of China. This rhetorical warfare is important to international relations because in the information age, the security dilemma refers not just to issues of hard security, but to image wars and soft power. **The mutual perception of hostility between China and the US thus could spin out of control in ways analogous to an arms race. Ultimately this mutual estrangement is a serious security issue. It risks producing policy shifts that would facilitate the move from symbolic conflict to actual military conflict - especially over Taiwan.** According to Johnston and Deng, the way out of this rhetorical security dilemma is realise that 'words can hurt'.

## 2NC/1NR — Blocks

### They Say: “Framework — Policy Option”

#### 1. False dichotomy between discourse, representations, and reality. Their argument wrongly assumes that policies toward China are distinct from thoughts about China — that's Pan.

#### 2. Discourse first. An examination of the representations of the affirmative must precede discussion of the plan. This is a crucial gateway to entering China policy analysis because the discursive choices we make inform and determine the range of possible policy options.

Goh 5 — Evelyn Goh, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and Visiting Fellow at the East-West Center, 2005 (*Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961-1974: From 'Red Menace' to 'Tacit Ally'*, Published by Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0521839866, p. 6-8)

The alternative questions posed in this study may be recognized as the "how possible" queries emphasized by constructivists, in contrast [end page 6] to the basic "why" questions that realists try to answer. 16 Constructivist approaches prioritize ideas and identity in the creation of state interests because they work from the basis that all reality is socially constructed. 17 The international system, for instance, does not exert an automatic "objective" causal influence on states' actions. Rather, state policy choices result from a process of perception and interpretation by state actors, through which they come to understand the situation that the state faces and to formulate their responses. Furthermore, actors may, by their actions, alter systemic structures and trends. 18 Even beyond that, some constructivists argue that actors themselves change as they evolve new ideas and conceptions about identity and political communities. Thus, the constructivist understanding of "reality" centers upon the interaction of the material and the ideational. 19 The forging of this intersubjective context is a contentious process, but often particular representations are so successful that they become a form of "common sense," encompassing a system of understanding about a body of subjects, objects, and issues with implicit policy consequences. This structure of representation may be termed a discourse, and a radical change in policy occurs when the prevailing discourse is challenged and altered.

The key conceptual focus in this study is on discourses, rather than on ideas, belief systems, or ideology, because the former conveys more effectively the multifaceted process by which meaning is constituted by policy actors and by which policy choices are constructed, contested, and implemented. Discourses may be understood as linguistic representations and rhetorical strategies by which a people create meaning about the world, and they are critical to the process by which ideas are translated into [end page 7] policy in two ways. 20 First, they perform a constraining or enabling function with regard to state action, in the sense that policy options may be rendered more or less reasonable by particular understandings of, for instance, China, the United States, and the relations between them. 21 Second, discursive practice is an integral element of sociopolitical relations of power. 22 As a key means of producing the categories and boundaries of knowledge by which reality is understood and explained by society, discourses are often deliberate and instrumental. In representing subjects and their relationships in certain ways, political actors have particular objectives and specific audiences in mind.

Here, the focus on changing discursive representations of China and China policy in official American circles allows us to study in particular the policy advocacy process – within internal official circles, to the public, and to the other party in the bilateral relationship – in a significant policy reversal. Bringing to bear the understanding that the creation of meaning by discursive practice is an essential means of influencing political action, this book investigates the contested process by which the different actors and parties defined and redefined identities, generated new knowledge, and created new meanings in order to construct and maintain a new U.S.-China relationship.

In this study, each discourse about China may be understood to encompass the following elements: an image or representation of China; a related representation of U.S. identity; an interpretation of the nature of U.S.-China relations; and the "logical" policy options that flow from these representations. For ease of reference, each subdiscourse that is identified here is centered upon the core image of China upon which it is built. An image is simply the perception of a particular object or subject, the normative [end page 8] evaluation of it, and the identity and meaning ascribed to it. 23 The concept of images is employed here mainly as an analytical shorthand, as the image is but one of four subcomponents of each discourse. 24

#### 3. Method first. Debates about method are a prerequisite to constructive policy discussion. Their framework prevents meaningful political debate.

Kurki 8 — Milja Kurki, Lecturer in the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University, 2008 (“Introduction: causation and the divided discipline,” *Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis*, Published by Cambridge University Press, ISBN 9780521882972, p. 8-9)

It should be noted that the approach adopted here is unashamedly theoretical and philosophical in nature. While philosophical, or meta- theoretical, discussions have often been subjected to criticism from the more empirically minded IR scholars, in my view philosophical reflection on the key concepts we use frequently, such as causation, is fundamental in the social sciences, IR among them. This is because, as Colin Wight puts it, ‘conceptual inquiry is a necessary prerequisite to empirical research’.21 Without an adequate understanding of the ways in which we apply concepts, appreciation of the reasons for our conceptual choices, and recognition of the strengths and the weaknesses [end page 8] that our use of key concepts entail, we run the risk of conducting empirical studies that we cannot justify or that amount to nothing more than aimless fact-finding. Also, we risk not being able to understand how and why our accounts might differ from those of others and, hence, are not able to engage in constructive debate with other perspectives. This book is motivated by the belief that IR has not become too theoretical or philosophical at the expense of empirical inquiry:22 rather it still remains inadequately reflective towards many fundamental concepts used in empirical analyses. While meta-theoretical, or philosophical, debate is clearly in and of itself not the sole or the central aim of Inter- national Relations scholarship, it should not be forgotten that the ways in which we ‘see’ and analyse the ‘facts’ of the world political environment around us are closely linked to the kinds of underlying assumptions we make about meta-theoretical issues, such as the nature of science and causation. Indeed, the analysis here is motivated by the belief that whenever we make factual, explanatory or normative judgements about world political environments, important meta-theoretical filters are at work in directing the ways in which we talk about the world around us, and these filters are theoretically, linguistically, methodologically, and also potentially politically consequential.23 It follows that philosophical investigation of key concepts such as causation should not be sidelined as ‘hair-splitting’ or ‘meta-babble’,24 but embraced—or at least engaged with—as one important aspect of the study of international relations.

#### 4. Prefer issue-specific evidence. Representations are specifically key in the context of China. The way we think about China is more important than government-to-government interactions.

Liss 3 — Alexander Liss, M.A. student in the Asian Studies Program at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington University, 2003 (“Images of China in the American Print Media: a survey from 2000 to 2002,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Volume 12, Issue 35, May, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Elite, p. 299-300)

The relationship between the United States and China works on many levels and involves many actors. The phrase ‘Sino–US relations’ usually brings to mind an image of interaction between the governments of each country. Yet, if we merely examine the diplomacy between the two countries, then we are left with an incomplete picture of the forces that affect how the nations engage each other. A key element to consider is the relationship between the two societies. Popular opinion and popular perceptions of each culture in the eyes of the other are far [end page 299] more subtle elements to consider, yet they are no less important than the official acts of government, and indeed, may even be more so.

#### 5. Empirically proven. Congressional debates about China prove our argument. Hostile representations of a “China Threat” manifest themselves in ineffective policies and undermine relations.

Lubman 4 — Stanley Lubman, Lecturer of Law and Visiting Scholar for the Center for the Study of Law and Society at the University of California-Berkeley, 2004 (“The Dragon As Demon: Images Of China On Capitol Hill,” Center for the Study of Law and Society Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program, JSP/Center for the Study of Law and Society Faculty Working Papers, Paper 18, March 4, Available Online at http://repositories.cdlib.org/csls/fwp/18/, Accessed 09-24-2006, p. 22-24)

Any faint hope that narrow and dogmatically negative views of China might be tempered is no more than a whistle in the dark, but the debates that have been quoted here suggest that there is a good deal of darkness in Congress that needs to be illuminated. Unfortunately, the groups in Congress that have been identified here as anti-Chinese gather strength from their numbers taken together, and are more likely than not to continue to join forces, especially on the economic issues that grew prominent in 2003. On these latter issues, moreover, Congressional emotions are understandably fueled by [end page 22] knowledge of the pain of constituents who lose jobs because their employers move manufacturing activities to China or close in the face of competition from China.

This article has explored only the surface manifestations of deeper issues that lie beneath the Congressional debates because it has been concerned only with what has been said publicly, for the record. It undoubtedly slights many other members whose spoken words have been few, but who are more temperate in their judgments than some of their more vocal colleagues. More important, relationships with interest groups lie behind the one-dimensional images of China in Congress that have been illustrated here. Labor unions, human rights advocates and anti-abortion groups have been among China’s strongest critics, and there are others less obvious, such as Taiwan-funded lobbyists. The impact of the lobbyists is reinforced, however, by what one veteran of thirty years of China-watching in the US government has noted as “the lack of professional training or experience in dealing with China on the part of congressional staff members critical of administration policy.”40 But when members of Congress reflect uncritically what lobbyists and poorly-informed staff tell them, ignoring the complexities of modern China, they are led into drastic oversimplification of their debate and thought on China policy.

It is impossible to differentiate among the reasons underlying the demonizing of China by some in Congress, but some ignorance, willful or not, underlies the words of the demonizers. More than ignorance is involved, of course, and inquiry into the dynamics of Congressional participation in making China policy obviously must go behind the Congressional debate that forms the public record. Whatever other factors are at work, however, the rhetoric that dominates discussions of China by some members of Congress promises to continue to deform not only their personal perspectives, but the contribution that Congress makes to formulation of this country’s China policy. At the very least, administration policymakers are

“diverted from other tasks…Much time is spent dealing with often exaggerated congressional assertions about negative features of the Chinese government’s behavior…The congressional critics are open to a wide range of Americans— some with partisan or other interests – who are prepared to highly in often graphic terms real or alleged policies and behaviors of the Chinese government in opposition to US interests.”41

It is difficult not to agree with the conclusion of one recent study, that “the cumulative effect” of Congressional criticism of the China policies under both the first President Bush and President Clinton “reinforced a stasis in US-China relations and slowed forward movement.”42 Of the PNTR debate itself, it has recently been said that

“…the rancorous partisanship in both House and Senate during the PNTR process, and the numerous other challenges highlighted by the protagonists – [end page 23] nonproliferation, human rights, trade deficits, and other issues – sharpened the disagreements and laid the ground for future battles… the potential remained for even more controversy and contention over China policy.”43

Indeed, the passage of time and the growing power of economic issues since the PNTR debate underlines the trenchancy of this prediction, as the concluding section of this article suggests.

### They Say: “Reject Representations”

#### Representations of China come first — they inevitably shape the policies that result. Aff plan can’t be divorced from the 1AC discourse that supports it.

Turner 11 — Oliver Turner, Hallsworth Research Fellow, 2011 (“Sino-US relations then and now: Discourse, images, policy”, Political Perspectives, <http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/7893232/sino-us-relations1.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1466627631&Signature=%2FsH5l2JqerSrFnjwvHGSf5Gz0%2F0%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DSino-US_Relations_Then_and_Now_Discourse.pdf>, accessed 22nd June, CE)

David Campbell provides a useful reorientation of traditional assumptions of foreign policy so that analysis shifts from a concern for the relations between states to one for the processes by which states are made foreign in relation to one another. **Societal representations of foreign lands and people, he argues, are more than descriptions of others ‘out there’. They constitute the discursive construction of states at all levels of society and the ubiquitous process by which actors are made foreign in relation to the identity of the self.** When understood in these terms, processes of representation become a ‘specific sort of boundary producing political performance’ (Ashley, 1987, p.51, emphasis in original). **The power inherent to domestic or societal discourse, then, is such that the truths it advances are able to create the necessary reality within which particular policies are not only enabled but justified as logical and proper courses of action.** As Foucault explains, power is understood to be inextricable from knowledge so that one cannot be advanced in the absence of the other (Foucault, 1980: 52). The result is a power/knowledge nexus which precludes the advancement of discourse and the establishment of truth as neutral or dispassionate endeavours (Foucault, 1979). **Discursive representation, then, is unavoidably performative in the sense that ‘it produces the effects that it names’** (Gregory, 1995: 18). Ellingson agrees, noting that the historical construction of non-Europeans as ‘lower’ peoples has been at the heart of the establishment of a global European hegemony (Ellingson, 2001: xiii). **International relations therefore represent an arena of power that is both political and discursive, wherein discourses create** 32 **certain possibilities and preclude others** (Apple, 2003, p.6). **This means that American discourses and imagery about China have never been produced objectively or in the absence of purpose and intent.** Their dissemination must always be acknowledged as a performance of power, however seemingly innocent or benign. **They are able to create the imagined conditions within which** appropriate, and perhaps even ostensibly **unsavoury, action can be enacted while other potential policies are dismissed as inappropriate or impossible.** As Doty confirms, ‘the naturalization of meaning has had consequences ranging from the appropriation of land, labor and recourses to the subjugation and extermination of entire groups of people’ (Doty, 1998: 7). **American threat representations of China formulate an aggressive Chinese identity.**

#### China’s construction as a threat directly influences US policy.

Turner 14 — Oliver Turner, Research Associate at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester, 2014 (“American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy” Rutledge, Available online via Google Books, Accessed 6-22-2016, SAA)

American images of China have always been central to the formulation, enactment and justification of US China policy in Washington. As examined in Chapter 1, the relevant literatures have commonly neglected to inform upon the significance of historical and contemporary American images of China to US foreign policy towards that country. It is argued here that the former have always been inextricable from every stage of the formulation, enactment and justification of the latter. US China policy, in other words, has consistently been enabled and legitimized by powerful images which have worked to determine the boundaries of political possibility. As already noted, this analysis shifts from a concern with the types of ‘why‘ questions that have been so frequently posed in the past, to ‘how’ questions which provide new avenues of exploration. ‘Why’ questions assume that particular policies and practices can happen by taking for granted the identities of the actors involved.'0 For example, why did nineteenth-century American traders support the British in their conflicts with China, and why did their government subsequently seek a treaty with the Chinese? ‘How‘ questions, meanwhile, investigate the production of identity and the ways in which this process ensures that selected practices can be enacted while others can be precluded. For example, how could a self-proclaimed anti-imperialist nation engage in ostensibly imperialist policies towards China in the nineteenth century and consider those policies legitimate? This book does not make claims of cause and effect, of causal linkages between imagery and action. Rather, it is understood that the power of imagery lies primarily in its ability to circulate and become truth so that certain courses of policy are enabled whether its intended purpose was to facilitate action or not. As such, this book reveals the specific historical conditions within which US China policies have occurred through an analysis of the political history of the production of truth.'2 It argues that while the US has traditionally dominated its material relations of power with China through superior economic and military capabilities, it has also been dominant through the power of representations to establish truths about that country and its people and enact and legitimize policies accordingly. Material forces are therefore of core significance to this analysis. However, it is shown that the nature and degree of that significance has always been contingent upon particular ideas which give those forces meaning. Crucially, it is argued that the types of comparatively more stable and enduring imagery described above have always proven more significant in this regard. The ‘anti-imperialist‘ United States of the nineteenth century, for example, could justify imperialist practices towards Uncivilized China (as well as Opportunity China) during the opium wars because it was understood that it had to be brought into the civilized world. In the 1970s and l980s Washington‘s more conciliatory approach towards the PRC was similarly enabled principally by representations of a less uncivilized and less threatening China than had seemingly existed in the recent past. It is thus shown that key constructions of China have functioned in the service of policy not merely through an increasing prominence within American imaginations, but in some cases by virtue of their retreat. Moreover - and of key importance - it is demonstrated that twenty-first century US China policies frequently rely upon images which emerged and became established during the very earliest encounters between Americans and Chinese.

#### Academics must pay attention to language in debates about China.

Song 15 — Weiqing Song, associate professor of political science at the University of Macau, received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Siena, Italy. His research interests include European politics, Chinese foreign policy, and China's post-socialist regime. His research has appeared in a number of international peer-reviewed journals- *The China Review, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 145-169 Securitization of the "China Threat " Discourse: A Poststructuralist Account* TMY 6/22/16

In the scientific mode, the China threat is securitized via "scientific" reasoning. In this regard, the referent object is the national security of the United States, the world's single remaining superpower and its allies. The subject or audience comprises the intellectual elites and, more important, policy makers of the United States and its allies. The securitizers are IR academics and policy analysts, represented in the above extract by Mearsheimer. From the poststructuralist perspective, these agents perform securitization acts by formulating theories, predicting inevitable outcomes, and advocating policy options. As a result, the distinction between theory and practice disappears at this point. To ensure that the issue of the China threat is situated in the relevant epistemic terrain, the proper language must be adopted for academic debate on the existence and nature of the threat posed by China. Mearsheimer thus claims that his argument is based on a "theory" of rising great powers and the effects of their rise on international politics. As students of international politics will immediately recognize, this "theory" is the "offensive" variant of the realist IR tradition, well documented in Mearsheimer's 2001 book The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,43 In this influential study, Mearsheimer presents his argument on the China threat issue with consummate professionalism. He first enumerates the five "bedrock" assumptions of offensive realism: an anarchic international system; the inherently offensive military capabili ties of great powers; uncertainty about other states' intentions; survival as the primary goal; and the rationality of state actors. The combined effects of these assumptions are that great powers tend to be fearful of each other, to rely upon themselves for their survival, and to try by any means to maximize their own power.44 Mearsheimer concludes that this "scientific" logic is generally applicable as an explanation of the behavior of great powers that "seek to gain as much power as possible over their rivals."45

#### [More answers under “Framework — Policy Option.]

### They Say: “Permute – Do Both”

#### 1. This still links. The 1AC produced and disseminated unreflective knowledge about China. If we win our links, we’ve defeated the perm.

#### 2. The alternative is mutually exclusive. China watching — not *China* — needs to be the object of study. This requires abandoning positivism and beginning from a different starting point.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“Introduction: knowledge, desire and power in Western representations of China’s rise,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 2-4)

China Watching Rarely Watches Itself

These questions may strike many scholars as trivial and superfluous, if not odd. To others they may immediately smack of empty epistemological speculations — surely China watching is about uncovering and accumulating knowledge on China, with its core business centred on understanding key empirical issues that really matter in China’s relations with the world, issues ranging from power, capabilities, interests, intentions and identity to foreign policy, grand strategy and behaviour patterns. Thus, where periodically there have been welcome attempts to reflect on the ‘state of the art’ in China watching, 6 the main objectives of those reflections have been to help ‘build cumulative knowledge’ and to explore some ‘potential avenue for new research’.7 Predictably, such stock taking has been largely positive and self-congratulatory in tone. At the ‘Trends in China Watching’ conference held at George Washington University in 1999, participants seemed genuinely impressed by ‘the diversity of approaches an d perspectives’ in the field, which they regarded as ‘the most valuable asset China watchers have today’.8 Two prominent experts on Chinese foreign policy , Robert Ross and Alastair Iain Johnston, would concur . In their edited book on new directions in this China field, they claim that China scholars are now in a better position to meet the growing demand for sophisticated anal y sis on China’s foreign policy. 9 For still others , ‘the field is doing a good job of keeping up with and interpreting fast- changing developments in China, and… the international “state of the field” can be judged to be healthy and growing’.10 [end page 2]

Growing this field may be, but healthy it seems not. According to Roland Barthes, a ‘healthy’ sign should be honest about its own arbitrariness. Rather than pretending to be ‘natural’ or ‘objective’, it admits ‘its own relative, artificial status’. 11 Judging by this requirement, the IR branch of China watching appears far from healthy. As just noted, amidst an ongoing celebration of its scientific contribution to China knowledge, this field has thus far shown little critical self-reflection required of a healthy sign. True, some China watchers are aware of the limits of their own work and even the problematic status of China watching as objective knowledge. G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno lament that ‘the rich comparative and foreign policy scholarship on China’ is ‘under-theorized’, and they call for its better engagement with the ‘theoretical insights of international relations’. 12 David Shambaugh notes that while ‘rich in monographic literature on different periods and bilateral interactions’, the field ‘lacks studies with aggregate and reflective perspectives’.13 In a semi-autobiographical reflection on China watching, Richard Baum admits that objectivity in China studies is ‘an elusive grail’ and that our understanding is often coloured by ‘personal sentiments and emotions’. 14 Such reflections, however, often limited in scope and made in passing, remain a rare commodity.

Such a problem is not unique to IR China watchers. Anthropologists are said to be skilled at ‘probing other cultures’ but often fall short of reflecting on their own.15 Likewise, political scientists, always ready to expose the political and ideological baggage of practitioners, seldom subject their research to similar scrutiny.16 All this, it seems, reveals a common pitfall in human understanding itself: ‘The Understanding, like the Eye, whilst it makes us see, and perceive all other Things, takes no notice of itself: And it requires Art and Pains to set it at a distance , and make it its own Object’, thus wrote John Locke. 17 If human understanding needs to better understand itself, China watching as a particular subset of human understanding should also make itself its own object and allow for self-watching.

In research, watching the self may come in different forms. Autoethnography, for one, calls for the explicit use of the self as a methodological resource in the production of knowledge. 18 In this book, by ‘self’ I mean not literally the personal experience of China watchers (though that is no doubt fascinating in itself), but rather their collective knowledge products, the broader intellectual, socio- political context of their knowledge production, and their underlying ideas and imaginations of themselves as the knowing subject. Thus defined, self-watching in China studies requires not only a methodological shift, but also an ontological and epistemological rethinking (if we suppose that the former can ever be separated from the latter).

A key suspect for the conspicuous absence of healthy self-reflection in China watching has to be the ever-appealing positivism, an epistemological [end page 3] glue which helps hold an otherwise ‘argumentative China watching community’ together. 19 As an extremely influential theory of knowledge, positivism presupposes the existence of an objective reality ‘out there’, independent of our thought but ultimately amenable to scientific analysis.20 Crucially, claiming to have reached ‘the end of the theory of knowledge’, positivism performs ‘the prohibitive function of protecting scientific inquiry from epistemological self-reflection’.21 In this way, the epistemological question of how we know what we know seems no longer necessary. Insisting on a clear distinction between ‘observable facts and often unsustainable “speculations about them”’, David Martin Jones is irritated by the postcolonial effort of ‘exposing representation in literary “texts” or in film and music rather than addressing the empirical realm of social facts’. 22

Rallying around the positivist tradition, most China watchers in the IR field treat China as something made up of such observable facts. However complex those facts may be, and however difficult for China watchers to completely detach themselves from personal biases, it is believed that there is an ultimately knowable Chinese reality. The main task of China watching, by definition, should be about watching China. If China knowledge is indeed objective, scientifically testable, and professionally cumulative, then it would seem meaningless, if not self-indulgent, to dwell on questions such as what China knowledge is, who is producing it, how and for what purposes. 23 Consequently, it is no surprise that few in the China-studies community have shown interest in such philosophical reflections and still fewer are keen on epistemological debates on China watching; 24 such debates, standing apparently in the way of accumulating further knowledge on China, would appear not only unhelpful but needlessly polemic and divisive.

#### 3. Turn: Filtering. The permutation makes non-confrontational images and understandings impossible by filtering reflection through the lens of confrontation, hardening aggression and making sustainable engagement impossible.

Shambaugh 3 — David Shambaugh, Professor of Political Science & International Affairs and Director of the China Policy Program in the Elliot School of International Affairs at The George Washington University and nonresident Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program and Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at The Brookings Institution, 2003 (“Introduction: Imagining Demons: the rise of negative imagery in US-China relations,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Volume 12, Issue 35, May, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Elite, p. 235-236)

Americans both romanticized and demonized China and the Chinese—consider-[end page 235]ing them to be cultivated and erudite as well as despotic and heathen, earthy yet superstitious, ideological yet pragmatic, stoic yet sadistic, conservative yet extremist, calm and introspective yet warlike and aggressive, weak yet formidable, and so on. For their part, the Chinese respected and sought to emulate the United States, while also feeling revulsion over many aspects of American society and culture and contempt for American behavior abroad. The United States was, for many Chinese, a ‘beautiful imperialist’ (Mei Di).

Sometimes these contradictory and dualistic images existed simultaneously in the collective mindsets of each, while during other periods one set of stereotypes became dominant and held sway for some time before swinging back in the opposite direction. Either way, scholars noted that this ambivalence produced a ‘love–hate syndrome’ in mutual imagery.2 This dual syndrome played directly into a fairly repetitive cycle in the relations between the two countries: Mutual Enchantment → Raised Expectations → Unfulfilled Expectations → Disillusion and Disenchantment → Recrimination and Fallout → Separation and Hostility → Re-embrace and Re-enchantment. And then the cycle repeats. While not always mechanical and predictable, the Sino–American relationship over the past century has tended to follow this pattern while ambivalent mutual images have paralleled and underlaid the pattern. The result has been alternating amity and enmity.

Two other aspects of Sino–American mutual perceptions have also been evident over time. The first is that neither side seems comfortable with, or is able to grasp, complexity in the other. While it is apparent that mutual images have become more diversified and realistic over time as a result of mutual contact and interaction,3 the perceptions of the other are still often reduced to overly simplistic stereotypes and caricatures which lack nuance and sophistication. Consequently, because they are derived from overly generalized image structures, they do not tend to easily accommodate incongruous information that contradicts the stereotypical belief— thus producing reinforcing cognitive dissonance and misperception. Certain images—such as the Chinese perception of American hegemony or the American perception of the Chinese government’s despotic nature—become so hardened and ingrained that behavior of the other is filtered through these dominant image constructs and does not allow for nuance or alternative explanations.

The second noticeable element is that perceptions of the other tend to say much more about the perceiver than the perceived. That is, there has been a persistent tendency to externalize beliefs about one’s own society and worldview on to the other. Writers, elites, and officials in each society are so imbued with their own worldviews that they not only instinctively impose it and its underlying assumptions on to the other, but reveal an extreme inability to ‘step outside’ of their own perceptual mindsets and see either the other or themselves as the other would. This results in mutual ‘deafness’ and unnecessary arrogance on each side.

#### 4. Turn: Footnoting. The permutation footnotes our criticism. This prevents genuine contestation of the logic underlying the 1AC.

Ashley and Walker 90 — Richard K. Ashley, Professor of Political Science at Arizona State University, and R.B.J. Walker, Professor of International Relations at the University of Victoria, 1990 (“Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/ Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 34, Available Online via JSTOR, p. 370)

These fragments of critical readings provide but a few examples of increasingly familiar ways in which scholars of international relations and the social sciences in general often interpret, interrogate, and reply to works of dissidence that speak from disciplinary margins. No doubt other examples could be offered. We think these fragments suffice, however, to illustrate a considerable range of likely critical responses that spans from left to right. Five things about these snippets are notable.

First, such critical commentary is not typically offered or received as the normal, proper activity of a discipline or tradition, however that discipline or tradition be defined. Such commentary is typically encountered in a footnote, a review essay, a contribution to the occasional symposium on the discipline’s future, a reading semi- nar, or the banter and sideplay of professional conferences. Rarely is it encountered as the main theme of a refereed journal article or a formal research presentation at a professional meeting. In brief, such commentary is offered as parenthesis. It is put forth as a pause that is occasioned by the passing encounter with the moment of dissidence and that is bracketed and set off from the real projects to which the commentators and their audiences are soon to return.

Second, when critical comments such as these are offered, they are typically pronounced in a cool, collected, self-assured voice of an “I” or “we” that neither stumbles nor quavers with self-doubt. Sometimes, this posture of self-assurance takes the form of nonchalance, even indifference, as if the commentary were roughly comparable to a remark about the shrubbery overgrowing the side of a highway one travels. An air of nonchalance is difficult to sustain, however, when dissident events disturb a sense of direction or when marginal works of thought pose questions that are difficult to ignore. On such occasions, equanimity often gives way to exasperation tinged with embarrassment, a sense that it would be better if these things did not have to be said, a regret that voices of dissidence-though sometimes raising interesting questions-are somehow oblivious to the obvious things that truly refined scholars should already know. On still other occasions, such as conversations between teacher and student, when the addressee of these critical readings cannot yet be presumed to be a mature member of the profession, an air of cool detachment might be replaced by a tone of sobriety, even solemnity, that reminds the potentially wayward novice that the reading is a kind of vow that he, like all members, must earnestly recite. Yet all these reading postures-nonchalance, exasperation, solemnity during the rite of passage-have something in common. As gestures in themselves, they at once presuppose and indicate the same location. These postures indicate that such critical remarks belong not at the center of the discipline where its serious and productive work is proudly presented and logically weighed, but at its boundaries, at its edges, at the thresholds or checkpoints of entry and exit. They indicate, in the same stroke, that the discipline’s territorial boundaries are already marked, that the difference between outside and inside is already given, and that the discipline, the tradition, the “everybody who knows and agrees with this reading” is already assuredly there.

### They Say: “No Alternative/Alternative Doesn’t Do Anything”

#### The alternative is a valuable methodological maneuver that fosters critical reflection on China watching. Deconstructing dominant discourses about China is productive and necessary.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 150-152)

Also, underlying those question is the belief that deconstruction is essentially destructive and thus has little constructive to contribute to China studies. However, as Derrida notes, deconstruction is 'a way of taking a position' rather than merely 'a flourish of irresponsible and irresponsible-making destruction'.8 By way of deconstruction, this book has hoped to generate both critical and constructive reflections on the way we think about the nature of China knowledge as well as the way such knowledge can be [end page 150] better produced. To the extent that methodology is always implied in ontology and epistemology, my ontological and epistemological critique is not an exercise of esoteric verbal incantation, but carries important methodological messages for China watching, even though such messages could well be dismissed as hollow, mystifying or even alien by conventional standards.

One message from this study is that it is no longer adequate for us to be merely 'China' specialists who are otherwise blissfully 'ignorant of the world beyond China'.9 China watching needs autoethnography or 'self-watching' to consciously make itself part of its own object of critical analysis whereby the necessary but often missing comparative context can help us put China in perspective. All research, to be sure, must already contain some level of reflectivity, be it about methods of inquiry, hypothesis testing, empirical evidence, data collection, or clarity of expression. And the Western representations of China's rise, predicated on some particular ways of Western self-imagination, are necessarily self-reflective in that sense. And yet, such narrow technical reflectivity or narcissistic posturing is not what I mean by 'self-watching'. In fact, the unconscious Western self-imagination as the modern knowing subject (who sets itself apart from the world and refuses to critically look at itself) is the very antithesis of self-watching.

Self-watching, I suggest, requires at once discarding this positivist self-(un)consciousness and cultivating a critically reflective, philosophising mind. 'The philosophizing mind', wrote Collingwood, 'never simply thinks about an object, it always, while thinking about any object, thinks also about its own thought about that object'. 30 This position is similar to that of 'ironists'. According to Richard Rorty, ironists are 'never quite able to take themselves seriously because always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves’.11

In the concluding chapter of his Scratches on Our Minds, Harold Isaacs seemed to have endorsed such 'ironist' approaches to China studies: 'we have to examine, each of us, how we register and house our observations, how we come to our judgments, how we enlarge our observations, how we describe them, and what purposes they serve for us'.2 Back in 1972, John Fairbank put such reflection in practice by suggesting that America's Cold-War attitude towards China was based less on reason than on fear, a fear inspired not by China but by America's experience with Nazi and Stalinist totalitarian regimes. 13 These examples clearly show the possibility of reflective China watching, but alas, as noted from the beginning, such reflectivity is hardly visible in today's 'China's rise' literature. Indeed, without the trace of a single author, the two dominant China paradigms hinge onto a ubiquitous collective psyche and emotion that is often difficult to see, let alone to criticise from within. [end page 151]

Yet it is imperative that such self-criticism should occur, which entails problematising China watchers' own thought, vocabularies and taken-for-granted self-identity as disinterested rational observers. It requires us to pause and look into ourselves to examine, for example, why we constantly fear China, rather than taking that fear as given: 'We are wary of China because we are wary of China'. Self-watching demands an ironist awareness of the contingency, instability, and provinciality of mainstream China knowledge, its intertextual and emotional link to the fears and fantasies in the Western self-imagination, the political economy of its production, and the attendant normative, ethical and practical consequences both for dealing with China and for serving the power and special interests at home. Put it differently, it requires a deconstructive move of intellectual decolonisation of the latent (neo)colonial desire and mindset that, despite the formal end of colonialism decades ago, continues to actively operate in Orientalism knowledge and China watching, facilitated by its various scientific, theoretical, and pedagogical guises.

#### Their insistence on a positivist alternative proves the link. Our critique is a study of China.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 150)

China Knowledge and Self-Reflection

Until now, my focus seems to have been mainly on how not to understand China's rise. While deconstruction is all well and good, one cannot help but wonder: How to study China? If those paradigms are problematic or less than adequate, what are the alternative ways of knowing this important country?

These questions sound reasonable enough. Be it scholars or practitioners, when faced with an apparently unprecedented transition from a transatlantic century to a transpacific century led by the 'rise' of China (and India), one is naturally anxious to know what China is up to and how to best respond to it. Yet, however understandable this desire may be, this book has hesitated to directly volunteer answers to those questions, or at least its implicit answers would be unlikely to satisfy those demands on their own terms. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, I am sceptical of some of their underlying ontological and epistemological premises about what China is and what China knowledge should mean. For example, those questions seem to assume that this book is merely a study of China studies (or a particular section of China studies), rather than a study of China per se. Hence their insistence on knowing how we might go about studying China proper. Yet, from the beginning, this knowledge/reality dichotomy has been problematised. Since there is no China-in-itself outside knowledge, representation or discourse, what we refer to as 'China' must already be coloured by such representations. Without reference to representations we cannot for a moment speak of China or do China studies. Given that China does not exist independently of discourse and that any study becomes part of its object of study, I should say that this analysis of Western discourses of China is already a study of China in the proper sense of the word.

### They Say: “China Is Real”

#### Yes, China is “real.” But that doesn’t answer our critique.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“Introduction: knowledge, desire and power in Western representations of China’s rise,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 4-5)

A Case for Watching China Watching

Critical epistemological reflection on the field of China’s international relations is anything but trivial. At one level, some measure of self-reflectivity is not only necessary but also unavoidable. It pervades all literary works, as literature is always implicitly a reflection on literature itself. 25 All forms of knowledge contain within themselves some conscious or unconscious, direct or indirect, autobiographical accounts of the knowing/writing self at either individual or certain collective levels. As evidenced in the self-image of positivist knowledge in general, the very absence of critical self-reflection in China watching already denotes a particular way of speaking about itself, namely, as a cumulative body of empirical knowledge on China. The problem is that this scientistic self-understanding is largely uncritical and unconsciously so. If Pierre Macherey is right that what a work does not say is as important as what it does say, 26 then this curious silence and unconsciousness [end page 4] in the writing of China’s rise needs to be interrupted and made more conscious, a process which Jürgen Habermas calls reflection. 27

Besides, it seems impossible for China watching to watch only China. Aihwa Ong notes that ‘When a book about China is only about China, it is suspect’.28 We may add that it is also self-delusional. China as an object of study does not simply exist in an objectivist or empiricist fashion, like a free-floating, self-contained entity waiting to be directly contacted, observed and analysed. This is not to say that China is unreal, unknowable or is only a ghostly illusion constructed entirely out of literary representation. Of course China does exist: the Great Wall, the Communist Party, and more than one billion people living there are all too real. And yet, to say something is real does not mean that its existence corresponds with a single, independent and fixed meaning for all to see. None of those aforementioned ‘real’ things and people beam out their meaning at us directly, let alone offer an unadulterated, panoramic view of ‘China’ as a whole. China’s existence, while real, is better understood, to use Martin Heidegger’s term, as a type of ‘being-in-the-world’. 29 The ‘in-the-world-ness’ is intrinsically characteristic of China’s being, which always needs to be understood in conjunction with its world, a world which necessarily includes China-bound discourse and representation.

R. G. Collingwood once said that ‘all history is the history of thought’, meaning that no historian can speak directly of hard historical facts without reference to various thoughts about those facts. 30 Likewise, insofar as China cannot exist meaningfully outside of language and discursive construction of it, no study of it is ever possible, let alone complete, without studying our thoughts about it. For this reason, echoing George Marcus and Michael Fisher’s call for ethnography to ‘turn on itself’ and ‘to create an equally probing, ethnographic knowledge of its social and cultural foundations’, 31 this book takes the representation of China (rather than ‘China’ itself ) as its main object of study. It calls for a critical autoethnographic turn in China watching.

### They Say: “China Is A Threat”

#### China threat rhetoric is ahistorical, ill-founded, and based in absolutist theory.

Swaine 15 — Michael Swaine, PhD, AM, Harvard University, BA, George Washington University, Senior Associate Asia Program @ the Carnegie Endowment, 2015 (“Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific: The Need for a Stable U.S.-China Balance of Power”, Carnegie Endowment, April 20th, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/20/beyond-american-predominance-in-western-pacific-need-for-stable-u.s.-china-balance-of-power/i7gi>, accessed June 24th, CE)

Chinese support for a multipolar, balance-of-power system is thus seen as a mere tactical feint designed to undermine U.S. power while Beijing prepares to become the new hegemon. Indeed, for such observers, Beijing’s greater assertiveness regarding maritime territorial disputes as well as U.S. and Japanese intelligence and surveillance activities along its coastline constitute strategic gambits designed to “test” U.S. and allied resolve and ultimately to create “no-go” zones essential for the establishment of Chinese control over the Western Pacific. Such an outcome would directly threaten both U.S. and allied interests in an open, secure, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region. Given this supposedly unambiguous threat, for these observers, the only logical course of action for the United States is to decisively disabuse Beijing of its aspirations by enhancing American predominance and thereby increasing, rather than reducing, Chinese vulnerability in the Western Pacific. This view is held not only by scholars and policy analysts outside Washington. It is also fairly common among U.S. government officials, both civilian and military. It offers a black-and-white, Manichean-type solution to a supposedly clear-cut threat, and one that is extremely appealing to those many U.S. policymakers and analysts convinced of the huge merits (and necessity) of continued American predominance in maritime Asia. In fact, even for those who reject the notion that Beijing is working to dislodge the United States from the region, predominance remains the best insurance against an uncertain future, for the reasons outlined above. While the type of U.S. predominance in Asia espoused by most U.S. observers can vary somewhat, depending in part on how one views China’s capabilities and intentions, the bottom line for virtually all such individuals is the need for a clear U.S. ability to prevail in any important military-political contingency involving China. Moreover, this view is reinforced, in their minds, by the notion that America’s allies and friends also supposedly desire and require continued U.S. maritime predominance. The problem with this outlook is that it is based on an inaccurate, increasingly unrealistic, and dangerous assessment of both the threat the United States confronts in Asia and the likely consequences of the remedy proposed. Beijing’s de facto attempts to limit or end U.S. predominance along its maritime periphery are motivated almost entirely by uncertainties, fears, insecurities, and a certain level of opportunism, not a grand strategic vision of Chinese predominance, despite the arguably growing expression of ultranationalist views within China. Those who view China as an aspiring hegemon seeking America’s subordination and ultimate ejection from Asia almost without exception base their argument on shaky theoretical postulates and faulty historical analogies or on the decidedly non-authoritative views of a few Chinese analysts, not current, hard evidence regarding either Chinese strategies and doctrines or Chinese behavior, past and present. Such observers argue that all rising powers seek hard-power dominance in an anarchic interstate system and that China is a power that always sought to dominate its world. However, such absolutist beliefs run counter to the very mixed record of power grabbing and power balancing, aggression and restraint, deterrence and reassurance that has characterized great power relations historically. They also ignore the fact that, in the premodern era, Chinese predominance within its part of Asia is most often consisted of pragmatic and mutually beneficial exchanges of ritualistic deference for material gains, not Chinese hard-power control. While implying a preference for symbolically hierarchical relationships with smaller neighbors, China’s premodern approach did not amount to a demand for clear-cut dominance and subordination. Moreover, the advent of modern, independent, and in most cases strong nation-states along China’s borders; the forces of economic globalization; and the existence of nuclear weapons have enormously reduced, if not eliminated, both the willingness and the ability of Chinese leaders today to dominate Asia and carve out an exclusionary sphere of influence, especially in hard-power terms. By necessity, their objective is to reduce their considerable vulnerability and increase their political, diplomatic, and economic leverage in their own backyard to a level where Chinese interests must be reflected in those major political, economic, and security actions undertaken by neighboring states. This is a much less ambitious and in many ways understandable goal for a continental great power. And it does not necessarily threaten vital U.S. or allied interests.

#### China threat discourse is unfounded, but its use turns the case — the US policies that result will create a threat where non currently exists.

Song 15 — Weiqing, associate professor of political science at the University of Macau, received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Siena, Italy. His research interests include European politics, Chinese foreign policy, and China's post-socialist regime. His research has appeared in a number of international peer-reviewed journals- *The China Review, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 145-169 Securitization of the "China Threat " Discourse: A Poststructuralist Account* TMY 6/22/16

Most of the Chinese scholars involved in this debate take a norma tive approach to the issue. They focus on two major questions: why the issue of the China threat exists and how to cope with it. Chen argues that from a legal and historical perspective, the China threat allegations made by U.S. politicians, defense officials, and academics are nothing but a reincarnation of the "yellow peril" conspiracy theory promulgated by Tsarist Russia and Wilhelmine Germany in the late 19th century.9 This view is echoed by Shi, who takes a postcolonial approach to inter preting the position of the China threat within Western discourse.10 More directly, Luo challenges the China threat thesis on the grounds that the nature of the international threat posed by China depends on its foreign policy strategy rather than on its growing power; as Chinese policy makers have exhibited little inclination to challenge international peace and stability, the China threat argument is unfounded." In terms of policy recommendations, Chinese scholars such as Chen, Feng, and Jiang suggest that the Chinese government should win trust from other states by making its peace-loving foreign strategy clear and participating more actively in the international community.12 A few researchers diverge from the mainstream response to this issue. Oliver Turner, for example, highlights the ideational rather than material factors in the processes of representing the China threat complicit in the U.S.-China policy.13 He argues that the main purpose of these processes is to create a threatening Chinese identity, foreign to that of the United States, to trigger actions that reinforce the binary opposition between the two countries. Before Turner and in the same vein, Pan This content downloaded from 132.174.255.217 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 17:55:24 UTC All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms 148 Weiqing Song takes a poststructuralist discursive approach to interpreting the role of the China threat within the U.S. political discourse. He focuses on the "discursive construction of otherness" by which China is fashioned as a "threatening, absolute other" to the "US-led evolutionary scheme."14 Much of Pan's discussion of this issue is devoted to real policy implica tions, namely the risk that considering "theory as practice" in U.S. policy will give rise to a real "China threat."15 He further expands his scope of enquiry by deconstructing the Western representation of China's rise. To him, dominant Western perceptions of China's rise tell us less about China and more about Western self-imagination and its desire for certainty. The present research takes an additional step in its approach to the West's China threat discourse by drawing on poststructuralist securitiza tion theory. The primary focus of this study, like that of similar existing research, is not to determine whether the so-called China threat is real, but to examine the articulation and performance of the China threat discourse in the West. In comparison with previous similar research, however, this study takes a more explicit and sophisticated poststructur alist approach that distinguishes itself from related approaches with which it is often confused, particularly social constructivism. The special contribution of this study lies in its identification of several major methods of securitization by which the China threat is fashioned in Western discourse. It mainly argues that different securitizers perform the China threat acts in their respective discourse communities. These acts aim to inspire various issues of the China threat thesis through communication, despite pointing to different referential objects, focusing on different target audiences and referring to different social spheres. The article proceeds as follows. The next section presents the poststruc turalist securitization framework used to analyze the concept of the "China threat," followed by one section on each of the three modes of securiti zation identified: scientific, normative, and mythical. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings.

#### China is not a threat. This framing undermines relations and makes war thinkable.

Broomfield 3 — Emma Broomfield, B.A. in International Affairs from the George Washington University, 2003 (“Perceptions of Danger: the China threat theory,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Volume 12, Issue 35, May, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Elite, p. 283-284)

China has experienced unprecedented growth in the past two decades and will inevitably rise to superpower status as an economic and military powerhouse. Because its economic growth is coupled with its vast territory, resources, and sheer number of people, China is guaranteed a future spot on the world stage as a nation [end page 283] to be considered in shaping the future of the Asia–Pacific; China has arguably already reached that point.

The anti-China hands have interpreted this growth as a threat against the interests of the United States and a precursor of conflict. While China’s emergence as a great power is obviously significant to US policy, the China threat has been grossly exaggerated. While it is true that some factions in China have engaged in a rhetorical debate against the US, so have many in America against China. The ideological threat of the spread of communism in the post-Cold War world of the twenty-first century is non-existent. China’s economic might will yield it extensive global power but as China prioritizes economic development and modernization, it is unlikely to use that position to bully its neighbors or the United States. The PRC’s military modernization must also be kept in perspective. It still spends less per capita than the US and China’s capabilities have thus far failed to meet its aspirations. Furthermore, China’s record in the region is relatively benign. Anti-China hands can rest assured that the US will remain militarily superior to China in the foreseeable future.

Mutual interests such as stability on the Korean Peninsula and economic prosperity in the region will move the two countries towards cooperation rather than conflict. While China may have the resources to pose a threat to the United States, the anti-China hands are wrong in assuming that the possession of those resources equates with the intent to use them. To label China as a military, economic, or ideological threat to the United States is an exaggeration of areas of tension in the Sino–American relationship and ignorance of its many realities and positive externalities. This viewpoint also reflects irresponsibility on the part of such thinkers and such continued rhetoric will only push China away from the ideals and goals of the United States. It is not America’s position to impose its will on China, but rather to cooperate with it as a legitimate partner in global affairs. Increased institutionalization of the relationship and interaction between the two nations will, in the end, only ensure America’s goal of guaranteeing peace in the Asia–Pacific region.

### They Say: “We Cite Empirics”

#### We don’t need any more China knowledge. The problem is how that knowledge has been produced.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 147-148)

Amid the ever-growing literature on the rise of China, one paradox can hardly escape our attention. That is, evocative of the amusing saying on the Oxford postcard, the more we write and debate about China, the less we seem to know it for sure. Over the years and after so many dedicated conferences, forums and publications, we do not seem to have come any closer to settling the perplexing questions such as what China really is and what its rise means for the rest of the world. The continuing China debate testifies to this lack of consensus. The editors of a book on China watching admit that as a result of the country's growing complexity, it is increasingly difficult to 'offer assured conclusions about "China" writ large'.3 Even William Kristol, a neoconservative authority on everything to do with international relations, once noted that 'I cannot forecast to you the action of China. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma'.4

For some this lack of certainty is all the more reason to keep on deciphering the China puzzle, but to me it is time to reflect on the ways China knowledge has been produced. As Karl Mannheim reminded us, when people face a bewildering array of divergent conceptions of things and situations, they need to 'turn[s] from the direct observation of things to the consideration of ways of thinking'.5 Throughout these pages, the book has sought to do just that, [end page 147] beginning with a deconstruction of the very dichotomies between things and thinking, reality and representation. It has explored a different set of issues that may come under the rubric of sociology of knowledge: How what we assume we already know about 'China' is not objective knowledge, but contingent representations; how those representations are themselves discursively constructed and worldly situated; and what implications they may have for Sino-Western relations in general and US-China relations in particular.

#### Their knowledge about China is not neutral or objective. China can’t be reduced to an object of study.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 148)

By exploring these questions, the book has turned China writing on its head. From a deconstructive-cum-constructivist perspective, it has sought to watch China watching in a way the IR field of China watching has not been systematically watched before. In particular, it has called into question the 'scientific knowledge' status of the twin China paradigms: 'threat' and 'opportunity'. What passes as 'China' through these paradigms is not an ontologically stable, unproblematic object 'out there' waiting for disinterested observation. Nor are these Western representations neutral, objective truth of that 'object'. Rather, there is something more than this: they are situated interpretations intertextually tied to the Western self-imagination, desire, and power. These paradigms tell us less about what is actually seen than about how it is seen and who might be behind this 'seeing'. They, as examined in Chapter 3, are as much about imagining the gazing self as about representing a Chinese Other.

### They Say: “China is Like X Country”

#### Analogies to other countries are not neutral — they’re carefully chosen to make China seem like a threat and distance it from the West.

Song 15 — Weiqing, associate professor of political science at the University of Macau, received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Siena, Italy. His research interests include European politics, Chinese foreign policy, and China's post-socialist regime. His research has appeared in a number of international peer-reviewed journals- *The China Review, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 145-169 Securitization of the "China Threat " Discourse: A Poststructuralist Account* TMY 6/22/16

Here, the China threat issue is securitized in a value-laden manner that is qualitatively different from the scientific mode. Nicholas Kristof, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and longtime commentator on China, does not simply state that China is threatening because it is not democratic; rather, he pursues the more nuanced argument that increasing nationalism in China is a major source of potential conflict with other nations. Yet even a careless reader of the above text may notice that the author adeptly links the alleged threat posed by China with the historical precedents of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan in the past century. Drawing such analogies between history and the present constitutes a securitization act. Using this mode of analogical reasoning, the China threat argument is structurally incorporated into a higher level of security discourse, situated among the "macro-securitising discourses" of political ideo logy,55 which involve certain ethical and subjective sets of doctrines, ideals, and worldviews about the governance of human societies, usually with a blueprint for a specific social order. It is important for poststruc turalist discourse analysts to bear in mind the perspective on social goods communicated in this use of language.56 Kristof attributes the possibility of a China threat to the Chinese government's ill-intentioned promotion of "ferocious nationalism." As one of the West's veteran commentators on China, Kristof noticed the country's vigorous rise much earlier than many others. Twenty years ago, in his early Foreign Affairs essay "The Rise of China," he warned that although China is neither a "villain" nor a "renegade country," it is "an ambitious nation."57 In this and other works, he has sought to define the possible China threat arising from Chinese nationalism. Such arguments involve the politics of identity. The poststructuralist approach to identity formation emphasizes the dualism that structures human experience, particularly the "interior/exterior (inside/outside) binary, according to which the inside is deemed to be the self, good, primary, and original while the outside is the other, dangerous, secondary, and derivative."58 However, when one tries to build one's own identity, the outside is always central to the composition of the inside. Conversely, when one builds an antagonist identity, the inside is essential to the construction of the outside. An interior/exterior binary is exactly what authors like Kristof seek to achieve in their securitization of the China threat issue. Kristof's argument fundamentally, if not overtly, differentiates China from the democracies of the West. Linking China with Nazi Germany and militarist Japan in the first half of the 20th century lends weight to his criticism of the Chinese government and its deliberate instigation of "ferocious nationalism" among the Chinese people. In this way, China is depicted as different from "normal" Western countries, which are represented as right, good, proper, and valuable.

### They Say: “We Cite Latest Data/Reports”

#### Focusing on empirical data ignores the role of self-imagination in Western scholarship. Better data won’t produce better knowledge.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“Introduction: knowledge, desire and power in Western representations of China’s rise,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 6-7)

Finally, where there exists useful criticism of Western IR discourses on China’s rise, the criticism is often confined to empirical debate or concerned with factual or narrowly-conceived methodological matters related to specific works, claims, or issues.42 Most participants in such debates agree that there is a real China out there, and that the main problem with Western representation [end page 6] lies in its misrepresentation, bias, or tainted perceptions: once such distortion is rectified, objective knowledge of China will be within reach. For example, having insightfully noted that ‘Our uncertainties about China are as much a product of uncertainties about ourselves as they are about China’, Brantly Womack then goes on to suggest that we should strive for an ‘accurate understanding of China’ through looking at the ‘real’ China and ‘its internal dynamic’.43 To many, Womack’s approach makes perfect sense: How could it be otherwise? And yet, appeals to ‘reality’ through more empirical research are ultimately of limited value. As Eric Hayot et al. put it, ‘noting the discrepancy between reality and representation, as it applies to particular objects of discourse, no longer works as critique… critique has to acknowledge imagination as something more than a distorter of fact’.44

Understanding representation as ‘something more’ than an empirical matter is crucial, though this does not mean that empirical analysis has become irrelevant; it has not and will not. But if our critique of Western representations stays at an empirical level, it will be ultimately ineffective, if not misleading itself. For one thing, there is no compelling reason to suggest that our newer empirical data can serve as a more reliable base on which to build China knowledge. Moreover, as will be made clear in the book, the overall function of Western representations is self-imagination. For all their claims to scientific objectivity, they have not been primarily about presenting an empirically accurate picture of China in the first instance. As such, no amount of ‘accurate’ empirical facts or logical reasoning contrary to Western assumptions of China is likely to succeed in challenging those assumptions.

### They Say: “We Cite Experts”

#### Their so-called ‘China experts’ use flawed methodologies. Their conclusions should be rejected.

Pan 4 — Chengxin Pan, Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University, 2004 (“The "China Threat" in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Volume 29, Issue 3, June/July, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Academic Search Premier, p. 315)

The (neo) realist paradigm has dominated the U.S. IR discipline in general and the U.S. China studies field in particular. As Kurt Campbell notes, after the end of the Cold War, a whole new crop of China experts "are much more likely to have a background in strategic studies or international relations than China itself." As a result, for those experts to know China is nothing more or less than to undertake a geopolitical analysis of it, often by asking only a few questions such as how China will "behave" in a strategic sense and how it may affect the regional or global balance of power, with a particular emphasis on China's military power or capabilities. As Thomas J. Christensen notes, "Although many have focused on intentions as well as capabilities, the most prevalent component of the [China threat] debate is the assessment of China's overall future military power compared with that of the United States and other East Asian regional powers." Consequently, almost by default, China emerges as an absolute other and a threat thanks to this (neo) realist prism.

### They Say: “Critique Overgeneralizes/Particularity”

#### Our argument doesn’t overreach. Power influences knowledge in subtle ways. Critical reflection about China knowledge is particularly important to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“The ‘China threat’ and the political economy of fear,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 82-83)

Consequently, for all the claims of the 'China threat' paradigm to be scientific knowledge and objective truth, it has its roots in power and is well-suited to the service of power. By taking note of the power/knowledge nexus in the construction and function of the China threat knowledge, I do not suggest that every single piece of work in the 'China threat' genre is written under the decree of the Pentagon in exchange for funding and/or political patronage. As noted above, the nexus often takes multiple forms, some of which are subtler, less visible and less direct than others. Indeed, it is in the interest of both knowledge and power that their liaison be kept as covert as possible. This is what Foucault means by the 'subtle mechanisms' in the production of knowledge where the exercise of power 'becomes capillary'.72 In his account of the relationship between the state, the foundations, and international and area studies during the Cold War, Cumings used the term 'going capillary' to describe how, through small, everyday and local avenues, such as decisions on who gets tenure, who edits prestigious journals, which research project gets funded, and which textbooks are adopted, power was able to maintain its presence so that 'people do things without being told, and often without knowing the influences on their behavior'.73 Also, once taking on a life of its own, knowledge can span an intertextual, disciplinary and institutional web within which it can self-generate, ostensibly removing itself a step further from power.

Thus far, I have critically examined the power/knowledge/desire nexus in the case of the 'China threat' paradigm. In doing I do not imply that the solution lies in the pursuit of pure knowledge and neutral scholarship on the part of those China watchers, who should shun government agencies, which in turn should stop funding social science research altogether. In the fields of social sciences at least, there is no such thing as pure knowledge, disconnected totally from desire and power. Indeed, as examined at the beginning of this book, pure social knowledge is neither possible nor even desirable. I am not against the power/knowledge/desire nexus per se; rather, my point is that we, as producers of knowledge, should guard against the possibility of being misused and abused by power which often serves special interests. We should be self-conscious and sensitive to the consequences—however unintended or even well-intended—of our knowledge as practice.

If all knowledge is linked to power in one way or another, it may beg the question of why the 'China threat' paradigm has been singled out here for criticism. The reason, I submit, is that not all knowledge/power nexuses are equal in terms of their intertextual influence or practical and moral implications. As noted above, associated with the 'China threat' knowledge has been a particular kind of political economy of fear. It not only lays the discursive foundation for military Keynesianism, but also has profound and even dangerous repercussions for Sino-Western relations in general and US-China [end page 82] relations in particular. When acted upon by foreign policy-makers, the 'China threat' paradigm runs the risk of turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy, an issue which will be examined in the next chapter.

### They Say: “Alternative Hurts Knowledge About China”

#### The alternative leads to better knowledge about China because it fosters critical self-reflection. Learning to accept that there are things we don’t know is important.

Pan 12 — Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, former visiting professor at the University of Melbourne, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Peking University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University and an LL.B. and LL.M. from Peking University, 2012 (“China watching: towards reflection and dialogue,” *Knowledge, Desire and Power in Global Politics: Western Representations of China's Rise*, Published by Edward Elgar Publishing, ISBN 1782544240, p. 152-153)

In this context, self-reflection cannot be confined to individual China watchers or even the China watching community. Never a purely personal pursuit or even a disciplinary matter, China knowledge is always inextricably linked with the general dynamism of Western knowledge, desire and power in global politics. Its self-reflection should thus extend to the shared collective self of the West, its assumed identity and associated foreign policy (China policy in particular). If China can be seen as a being-in-the-world, these issues are part and parcel of the world in which China finds itself and relates to others. But until now they have largely escaped the attention of China watchers. Maybe it is because these are primarily the business of scholars of Western/American culture, history and foreign relations, rather than that of China scholars. After all, there is a need for division of labour in social sciences. True, for various reasons it is unrealistic to expect China scholars to be at the same time experts on those 'non-China' issues. Nevertheless, since China watchers both rely on and contribute to their collective Western self-imagination in their understanding of China, it is crucial that they look at their collective Western self in the mirror. Take the negative image of China's brutal Soviet-style sports system for example. Every now and then, such an image will be reliably brought up to reinforce China's Otherness more generally. But if the ways American young talents are trained are put under the same spotlight, the difference between the US and China is no longer as vast as it appears. 14 In doing so, the previous China image is no longer as defensible as it seems. In brief, the broader point here is that the same China may take on quite different meanings when we are willing to subject ourselves to similar scrutiny. We may better appreciate why China looks the way it does when we are more self-conscious of the various lenses, [end page 152] paradigms, and fore-meanings through which we do China watching. Conversely, we cannot fully comprehend why the Chinese behave in a certain way until we pay attention to what we have done (to them), past and present. Such self-knowledge on the part of the West is essential to a better grasp of China. Without the former, China knowledge is incomplete and suspect.

Yet, to many, self-reflection is at best a luxurious distraction. At worst it amounts to navel-gazing and could turn into 'a prolix and self-indulgent discourse that is divorced from the real world'.15 Such concern is hardly justified, however. The imagined Western self is integral to the real world, and critical self-reflection also helps reconnect China watching to the 'real' world of power relations to which it always belongs. By making one better aware of this connection, it helps open up space for emancipatory knowledge. As Mannheim notes:

The criterion of such self-illumination is that not only the object but we ourselves fall squarely within our field of vision. We become visible to ourselves, not just vaguely as a knowing subject as such but in a certain role hitherto hidden from us, in a situation hitherto impenetrable to us, and with motivations of which we have not hitherto been aware. In such a moment the inner connection between our role, our motivations, and our type and manner of experiencing the world suddenly draws upon us. Hence the paradox underlying these experiences, namely the opportunity for relative emancipation from social determination, increases proportionately with insight into this determination.16

Still, there may be a lingering fear that excessive reflectivity could undo much of the hard-won China knowledge. But again to quote Mannheim, 'the extension of our knowledge of the world is closely related to increasing personal self-knowledge and self-control of the knowing personality'. 17 Even when that does expose our lack of knowledge about China, all is not lost. Such revelation is not a sign of ignorance, but an essential building block in the edifice of China knowledge. Confucius told us that 'To say that you know when you do know and say that you do not know when you do not know—that is [the way to acquire] knowledge'.13 Thus, the knowing subject can emancipate itself from its delusion about its own being;19 the real meaning of ignorance is that one claims to know when one does not or cannot know.

### They Say: “Fear Reps Inspire Action”

#### Security rhetoric fails — people are numbed rather than roused to action.

Sandman and Valenti 86 — Peter M. Sandman, risk communication consultant, JoAnn M. Valenti, Emerita Professor of environment and science journalism and PhD in Natural Resources, 1986 (“Scared stiff – or scared into action,” Peter M. Sandman website, January, Available Online at http://www.psandman.com/articles/scarstif.htm, accessed 06/24/16, JZ)

For ethical as well as methodological reasons, there are virtually no studies of the effects of fear appeals on highly fearful audiences, much less on audiences who have been catapulted beyond fear into numbness. The closest researchers have come is a series of studies showing that while strong fear appeals work best on mellow audiences, milder appeals work just as well, and sometimes better, when the audience is high in overall anxiety.(10) Only a few studies have tried to generate really substantial fear (none, quite properly, has aimed at terror), and their success has been modest. The Boster and Mongeau meta-analysis found only a 0.36 correlation between fear in the message and fear in the audience.(11) It is not so easy to scare people. Dwelling graphically on the horrors and statistics of home fires – scaring the audience as much as possible, which will not be all that much – may persuade people to buy smoke alarms for their homes. But for a person in a burning house, graphic images are beside the point. And if that person denies the fire is raging, further references to the danger can only deepen the numbing. Numerous testimonials indicate that the shock therapy of a fear appeal may sometimes cut through paralysis. But such testimonials are usually from activists who were neither paralyzed nor numb in the first place, whose fear was maintained at reasonable levels by their own activism, and who derived new energy and reinforcement from what people in the adjacent seats may well have found intolerable. Our wager is that the fear speeches revitalize the committed into renewed action, startle the apathetic into fresh attention, and torment the terrorized and the numb into starker terror and deeper numbness.

# Affirmative

## 2AC

### 2AC — Knowing China Critique

#### This is a link to people like the Heritage Foundation – the aff does not construct the threat of a rising China or have the US take advantage of it — we presented concrete analysis tied to real instances that supported by topic experts.

#### Perm — do both.

#### Not our argument – the aff is a nuanced depiction of Chinese motives that is backed up by empirics.

Swaine 15 — Michael Swaine, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ph.D. in Government from Harvard, 2015 (“Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific: The Need for a Stable U.S.-China Balance of Power,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* April 20th, Accessible Online at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/20/beyond-american-predominance-in-western-pacific-need-for-stable-u.s.-china-balance-of-power/i7gi>, Accessed On 04-14-2016)

This should not be surprising to anyone who understands modern Chinese history and great power transitions. Beijing has an ongoing and likely long-term and deep incentive to work with the United States and the West to sustain continued, mutually beneficial economic growth and to address a growing array of common global and regional concerns, from pandemics to climate change and terrorism. At the same time, it understandably wishes to reduce its vulnerability to potential future threats from the United States and other politically and militarily strong nations, while increasing its overall influence along its strategically important maritime periphery. As Beijing’s overseas power and influence grow, its foreign interests expand, and its domestic nationalist backers become more assertive, it will naturally become less willing to accept or acquiesce in international political and economic relationships, norms, and power structures that it believes disproportionately and unjustly favor Western powers; put China at a strategic, political, or economic disadvantage; or generally fail to reflect movement toward a more multipolar global and regional power structure. It will also likely become more fearful that a declining (in relative terms) Washington will regard an increasingly influential China as a threat to be countered through ever more forceful or deliberate measures. Indeed, this view is already widespread among many Chinese observers.

One does not need to cast Beijing as an evil or predatory entity to understand the forces driving such beliefs. They stem from national self-interest, historical insecurity (and nationalist pride), suspicion, fear, and uncertainty. To some degree, they also stem from a level of opportunism, driven in part by fear, but also in part by the understandable desire to take advantage of China’s growing regional and global influence and America’s apparent relative decline in order to strengthen Chinese leverage in possible future disputes.

#### No link and turn — the affirmative relies on China’s depictions of itself, not merely Western knowledge [explain].

#### Pan is reductionist and the alt fails — can never generate a meaningful relationship with China.

Jones 14 — David Martin Jones, Professor of Politics at University of Glasgow, PhD from LSE, Australian Journal of Political Science, February 21, 2014, 49:1, "Managing the China Dream: Communist Party politics after the Tiananmen incident ", Taylor and Francis Online

Notwithstanding this Western fascination with China and the positive response of former Marxists, such as Jacques, to the new China, Pan discerns an Orientalist ideology distorting Western commentary on the party state, and especially its international relations (6). Following Edward Said, Pan claims that such Western Orientalism reveals ‘not something concrete about the orient, but something about the orientalists themselves, their recurring latent desire of fears and fantasies about the orient’ (16). In order to unmask the limits of Western representations of China’s rise, Pan employs a critical ‘methodology’ that ‘draws on constructivist and deconstructivist approaches’ (9). Whereas the ‘former questions the underlying dichotomy of reality/knowledge in Western study of China’s international relations’, the latter shows how paradigmatic representations of China ‘condition the way we give meaning to that country’ and ‘are socially constitutive of it’ (9). Pan maintains that the two paradigms of ‘China threat’ and ‘China opportunity’ in Western discourse shape China’s reality for Western ‘China watchers’ (3). These discourses, Pan claims, are ‘ambivalent’ (65). He contends that this ‘bifocal representation of China, like Western discourses of China more generally, tell us a great deal about the west itself, its self -imagination, its torn, anxious, subjectivity, as well as its discursive effects of othering’ (65). **This is a large claim.** Interestingly, **Pan fails to note** that after the Tiananmen incident in 1989, **Chinese new left scholarship** also **embraced Said’s critique** of Orientalism in order **to reinforce** both **the party state and** a **burgeoning** sense of **Chinese nationalism**. To counter Western liberal discourse, academics associated with the Central Party School promoted an ideology of Occidentalism to deflect domestic and international pressure to democratise China. In this, they drew not only upon Said, but also upon Foucault and the post-1968 school of French radical thought that, as Richard Wolin has demonstrated, was itself initiated in an appreciation of Mao’s cultural revolution. In other words, the critical and deconstructive methodologies that came to influence American and European social science from the 1980s had a Maoist inspiration (Wolin 2010: 12–18). Subsequently, in the changed circumstances of the 1990s, as American sinologist Fewsmith has shown, young Chinese scholars ‘adopted a variety of postmodernist and critical methodologies’ (2008: 125). Paradoxically, these scholars, such as Wang Hui and Zhang Kuan (Wang 2011), had been educated in the USA and were familiar with fashionable academic criticism of a postmodern and deconstructionist hue that ‘demythified’ the West (Fewsmith 2008: 125–29). This approach, promulgated in the academic journal Dushu (Readings), deconstructed, via Said and Foucault, Western narratives about China. Zhang Kuan, in particular, rejected Enlightenment values and saw postmodern critical theory as a method to build up a national ‘discourse of resistance’ and counter Western demands regarding issues such as human rights and intellectual property. **It is through its affinity with this self-strengthening**, Occidentalist **lens, that Pan’s critical study should perhaps be critically read.** Simply put, Pan identifies a political economy of fear and desire that informs and complicates Western foreign policy and, **Pan asserts**, tells us more about the West’s ‘self-imagination’ than it does about Chinese reality. Pan attempts to sustain this claim via an analysis, in Chapter 5, of the self-fulfilling prophecy of the China threat, followed, in Chapters 6 and 7, by exposure of the false promises and premises of the China ‘opportunity’. Pan certainly offers a provocative insight into Western attitudes to China and their impact on Chinese political thinking. In particular, he demonstrates that China’s foreign policy-makers react negatively to what they view as a hostile American strategy of containment (101). In this context, Pan contends, accurately, that Sino–US relations are mutually constitutive and the USA must take some responsibility for the rise of China threat (107). **This latter point, however, is one** that Australian **realists** like Owen Harries, whom Pan cites approvingly, **have made consistently since the late** 19**90s.** In other words, **not all Western analysis uncritically endorses the view that China’s rise is threatening. Nor is all Western perception of this rise reducible to the threat scenario advanced by recent US administrations.** Pan’s subsequent argument that the China opportunity thesis leads to inevitable disappointment and subtly reinforces the China threat paradigm **is**, also, somewhat **misleading**. On the one hand, Pan notes that Western anticipation of ‘China’s transformation and democratization’ has ‘become a burgeoning cottage industry’ (111). Yet, on the other hand, Pan observes that Western commentators, such as Jacques, demonstrate a growing awareness that the democratisation thesis is a fantasy. That is, Pan, like Jacques, argues that China ‘will neither democratize nor collapse, but may instead remain politically authoritarian and economically stable at the same time’ (132). To merge, as Pan does, the democratisation thesis into its authoritarian antithesis in order to evoke ‘present Western disillusionment’ (132) with China **is** somewhat **reductionist**. Pan’s contention that we need a new paradigm shift ‘to free ourselves from the positivist aspiration to grand theory or transcendental scientific paradigm itself’ (157) **might be admirable, but this will not be achieved by a constructivism that would ultimately meet with the approval of** what Brady terms **China’s thought managers** (Brady: 6).

#### Plan-inclusive alternatives are illegitimate — they steal the 1AC, divert from the topic, and are infinitely regressive. If at the end of the debate, the plan is a good idea, you must vote aff.

#### Reps K assume *false Determinism*. Prefer the *particularized* and *surrounding context* of HOW our reps were deployed.

Shim 14 — (David Shim is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and International Organization of the University of Groningen – As part of the critique of visual determinism, this card internally quotes David D. Perlmutter, Ph.D.. He is Dean of the College of Media & Communication at Texas Tech University. Before coming to Texas Tech, he was the director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa. As a documentary photographer, he is the author or editor of seven books on political communication and persuasion. Also, he has written several dozen research articles for academic journals as well as more than 200 essays for U.S. and international newspapers and magazines such as Campaigns & Elections, Christian Science Monitor, Editor & Publisher, Los Angeles Times, MSNBC.com., Philadelphia Inquirer, and USA Today. Routledge Book Publication –Visual Politics and North Korea: Seeing is believing – p.24-25)

Imagery can enact powerful effects, since political actors are almost always pressed to take action when confronted with images of atrocity and human suffering resultant from wars, famines and natural disasters. Usually, humanitarian emergencies are conveyed through media representations, which indicate the important role of images in producing emergency situations as (global) events (Benthall 1993; Campbell 2003b; Lisle 2009; Moeller 1999; Postman 1987). Debbie Lisle (2009: 148) maintains that, 'we see that the objects, issues and events we usually study [. . .] do not even exist without the media [.. .] to express them’. As a consequence, visual images have political and ethical consequences as a result of their role in shaping private and public ways of seeing (Bleiker. Kay 2007). This is because how people come to know, think about and respond to developments in the world is deeply entangled with how these developments are made visible to them. Visual representations participate in the processes of how people situate themselves in space and time, because seeing involves accumulating and ordering information in order to be able to construct knowledge of people, places and events. For example, the remembrance of such events as the Vietnam War, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 or the torture in Abu Ghraib prison cannot be separated from the ways in which these events have been represented in films, TV and photography (Bleiker 2009; Campbell/Shapiro 2007; Moller2007). The visibility of these events can help to set the conditions for specific forms of political action. The current war in Afghanistan serves as an example of this. Another is the nexus of hunger images and relief operations. Vision and visuality thus become part and parcel of political dynamics, also revealing the ethical dimension of imagery, as it affects the ways in which people interact with each other. However, particular representations do not automatically lead to particular responses as, for instance, proponents of the so-called 'CNN effect’ would argue (for an overview of the debates among academic, media and policy-making circles on the 'CNN effect', see Gilboa 2005; see also. Dauber 2001; Eisensee/ Stromberg 2007; Livingston/Eachus 1995; O'Loughlin 2010; Perlmutter 1998, 2005; Robinson 1999, 20011. There is no causalrelationship between a specific image and a political intervention, in which a dependent variable (the image) would explain the outcome of an independent one (the act). David Perlmutter (1998: I), for instance, explicitly challenges, as he calls it, the **'visual determinism' of images,** which dominates political and public opinion. Referring to findings based on public surveys, he argues that the formation of opinions by individuals depends **not on images** but on their idiosyncratic predispositions and values (see also, Domke et al. 2002; Perlmutter 2005).

#### The plan is offense against the link and alternative — by directly engaging China, we improve relations *and* reduce Western beliefs that China is monolithic and knowable. The only way to analyze Chinese representations and discourse is to directly communicate with the people: the plan does that and the alternative makes it impossible.

#### Turn — China threat reps are essential to avoid conflict and engage China.

**Friedberg 1** —(Aaron L. Friedberg, Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School Professor of Politics and International Affairs, “News Post”, Commentary, Vol. 111, No. 2, February 2001, <https://lists.lsit.ucsb.edu/archives/gordon-newspost/2001-May/001274.html>, 10/17/12, atl)

Is it possible, finally, that merely by talking and perhaps even by thinking about a full-blown SinoAmerican rivalry we may increase the probability of its actually coming to pass? This is the clear implication of Michael Swaine ’s letter. Mr. Swaine worries that “ordinary observers,” unable to distinguish between descriptions of present reality and “hair-raising scenarios” of the future, will conclude that “an intense geostrategic rivalry is virtually inevitable, and . . . respond accordingly.” While I am flattered by the thought that my article could somehow change the course of history, I very much doubt that it, or a hundred more like it, will have any such effect. On the other hand, I am disturbed by the suggestion that we ought to avoid discussing unpleasant possibilities for fear that someone (presumably our political representatives and “ordinary” fellow citizens) might get the wrong idea. Acknowledging real dangers is a necessary first step to avoiding them, as well as to preparing to cope with them if they should nevertheless come to pass. Refusing or neglecting to do so, it seems to me, is a far more likely formula for disaster.

#### Plan focus is the best model for debate — it’s a yes/no question that can be answered by the judge, it’s most predictable for policy-based resolutional questions, and it prevents the infinite regression of smaller and smaller reps. Key to fairness.

#### Reps don’t shape reality in the China debate.

Goddard 15 — Stacie E. Goddard, Jane Bishop Associate Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College, and Ronald R. Krebs, Beverly and Richard Fink Professor in the Liberal Arts and Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, 2015 (“Securitization Forum: The Transatlantic Divide: Why Securitization Has Not Secured a Place in American IR, Why It Should, and How It Can,” *Duck of Minerva* — Political Science Blog, September 18th, Accessible Online at <http://duckofminerva.com/2015/09/securitization-forum-the-transatlantic-divide-why-securitization-has-not-secured-a-place-in-american-ir-why-it-should-and-how-it-can.html>, Accessed On 04-14-2016)

\* Modified for ableist language.

But there are (good) substantive and (not so good) sociological reasons that securitization has failed to gain traction in North America. First, and most important, securitization describes a process but leaves us well short of (a) a fully specified causal theory that (b) takes proper account of the politics of rhetorical contestation. According to the foundational theorists of the Copenhagen School, actors, usually elites, transform the social order from one of normal, everyday politics into a Schmittian world of crisis by identifying a dire threat to the political community. They conceive of this “securitizing move” in linguistic terms, as a speech act. As Ole Waever (1995: 55) argues, “By saying it [security], something is done (as in betting, a promise, naming a ship). . . . [T]he word ‘security’ is the act . . .” [emphasis added]. Securitization is a powerful discursive process that constitutes social reality. Countless articles and books have traced this process, and its consequences, in particular policy domains.

Securitization presents itself as a causal account. But its mechanisms remain obscure, as do the conditions under which it operates. Why is speaking security so powerful? How do mere words twist and transform the social order? Does the invocation of security prompt a visceral emotional response? Are speech acts persuasive, by using well-known tropes to convince audiences that they must seek protection? Or does securitization operate through the politics of rhetorical coercion, silencing potential opponents? In securitization accounts, speech acts often seem to be magical incantations that upend normal politics through pathways shrouded in mystery.

Equally unclear is why some securitizing moves resonate, while others ~~fall on deaf ears~~ [are ignored]. Certainly not all attempts to construct threats succeed, and this is true of both traditional military concerns as well as “new” security issues. Both neoconservatives and structural realists in the United States have long insisted that conflict with China is inevitable, yet China has over the last 25 years been more opportunity than threat in US political discourse—despite these vigorous and persistent securitizing moves. In very recent years, the balance has shifted, and the China threat has started to catch on: linguistic processes alone cannot account for this change. The US military has repeatedly declared that global climate change has profound implications for national security—but that has hardly cast aside climate change deniers, many of whom are ironically foreign policy hawks supposedly deferential to the uniformed military. Authoritative speakers have varied in the efficacy of their securitizing moves. While George W. Bush powerfully framed the events of 9/11 as a global war against American values, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a more gifted orator, struggled to convince a skeptical public that Germany presented an imminent threat to the United States. After thirty years as an active research program, securitization theory has hardly begun to offer acceptable answers to these questions. Brief references to “facilitating conditions” won’t cut it. You don’t have to subscribe to a covering-law conception of theory to find these questions important or to find securitization’s answers unsatisfying.

A large part of the problem, we believe, lies in securitization’s ~~silence on~~ [disregard of] the politics of security. Its foundations in speech act theory have yielded an oddly apolitical theoretical framework. In its seminal formulation, the Copenhagen school emphasized the internal linguistic rules that must be followed for a speech act to be recognized as competent. Yet as Thierry Balzacq argues, by treating securitization as a purely rule-driven process, the Copenhagen school ignores the politics of securitization, reducing “security to a conventional procedure such as marriage or betting in which the ‘felicity circumstances’ (conditions of success) must fully prevail for the act to go through” (2005:172). Absent from this picture are fierce rhetorical battles, where coalitions counter securitizing moves with their own appeals that strike more or less deeply at underlying narratives. Absent as well are the public intellectuals and media, who question and critique securitizing moves sometimes (and not others), sometimes to good effect (and sometimes with little impact). The audience itself—whether the mass public or a narrower elite stratum—is stripped of all agency. Speaking security, even when the performance is competent, does not sweep this politics away. Only by delving into this politics can we shed light on the mysteries of securitization.

We see rhetorical politics as constituted less by singular “securitizing moves” than by “contentious conversation”—to use Charles Tilly’s phrase. To this end, we would urge securitization theorists, as we recently have elsewhere, to move towards a “pragmatic” model that rests on four analytical wagers: that actors are both strategic and social; that legitimation works by imparting meaning to political action; that legitimation is laced through with contestation; and that the power of language emerges through contentious dialogue.

#### Judge choice — if our reps are bad, reject those and vote aff for other reasons. Good ideas should be accepted regardless of single instances of poor reasoning — otherwise one bad reason eliminates every proposal from policy discussion, dooming policy-making.

**They Say: “Self/Other/Alterity Link”**

#### No impact — “alterity” and “otherness” are vague buzzwords that have zero political value or predictive power

Mwajeh 5 — [Z Al-Mwajeh, Indiana University of Pennsylvania The School of Graduate Studies and Research Department of English, “CRITIQUE OF POSTMODERN ETHICS OF ALTERITY VERSUS EMBODIED (MUSLIM) OTHERS”, August 2005, <https://dspace.iup.edu/bitstream/handle/2069/23/Ziad%20Al-Mwajeh.pdf?sequence=1>]

However, I also think that key postmodernism tenets of radical alterity, incommensurability and undecidability cannot be easily thematized in writing, nor can they be **realized in praxis**. They are aporiatic. The only way to explicate their meanings and possibilities is through using modernist vocabulary they initially oppose and deconstruct. Sometimes, thematizing these aporiatic concepts, one lapses into cryptic and even incantational figurative language**, a practice that exposes the practical limitation** and limited accessibility of such cherished concepts (or non-concepts). **As a result, their translation into, or coextension with, lived realities become basically hypothetical, too.** Consequently, the abstract and idealized postmodern concepts verge on, and intersect with, **mystic**, (sometimes Biblical) **allusions** and traditions, a situation that **problematizes their political value and descriptive power in the realm of action**. For example, in Levinasian thought, knowing the other is incompatible with preserving its alterity. All representational endeavors reduce, or fail to capture, what they supposedly represent not only due to imperfect linguistic mediums, but also due to the fact that representation itself is a logocentric institution. It represents the other or the object from the perspective of the Same, usually a priori reducing its uniqueness or sublimity to the known, quantifiable and predictable. To curb such modernist reductive practices, Levinas’s alterity escapes all modernist categories as it is an Other not in a relational or quantifiable way. Rather, it is an Other in the sense of eliding comprehension and representation. Such Other resembles Levinas’s (Biblical) conception of God as absolute Alterity where our epistemological categories or mind cannot contain or represent Him. More important, **the ethics of alterity usually soars above urgent concrete issues that involve politically and economically charged self-other transactions.** Levinas’s other is ‘disembodied,’ not in Dr. Laing’s sense (e.g. The Divided Self). Rather, Levinas’s **alterity cannot be substantiated.** Defining or embodying the other violates its alterity and sublimity. Hence, any grand appeal such ethics may initially spark becomes questionable when **juxtaposed to our existing realities** and the factors that regulate self/other different modes of relations. 6¶ Statement of the Problem, Limitations of the Study and Methods ¶ In this study, I attempt to dislodge postmodern ethics from its speculative and elitist tendencies through turning to self-other ethical relations in various literary, discursive and political situations. I focus on bridging the gaps between theory and practice in order to expose the rifts and blind spots in postmodern ethics of alterity. I think that the demands that ‘alterity’ as a generalized abstract term exert differ from those raised by placed and temporalized others. For example, there is an urgent need to know how well Levinas’s concept of ‘absolute alterity’ or Derrida’s concept of ‘undecidability’ fares in political situations. In other words, to argue for prioritizing alterity as a new ethical turn is not the same as to motivate and effect such prioritization. While I agree that Levinas’s “infinite obligation to the other” sounds uplifting, realizing/effecting such a formula is a different story. Theoretically speaking, alterity is embraceable, but in lived realities, others fall on a spectrum of difference (sometimes opposition) from self according to various criteria. Actually, there is a general tendency to posit self and others in terms of difference and opposition, when in fact these are relative and operational terms. Polarizing self and other risks ossifying them into rigid negatively defining entities at the expense of their interdependence and mutual constitution. The terms other and self do not only designate metaphysical figures or linguistic relations, they also describe ontological realities. The metaphor of the ‘embrace’ may in it turn conceal a whole repertoire of idealism, philanthropy, and logocentrism/humanism. Worse, sometimes Levinasian ethics seems so good to be true or realizable, at least if taken literally. For the demand to meet the other on a neutral ground, pre-ontologically, looks more like an aesthetic ideal/condition that cannot be achieved as we always meet the other in context with our conceptions, motivations and values. Blaming Western Metaphysics, or ontology, for the imbalanced self-other relations somehow **brackets subject’s role and agency in the self-other various equations.**7 ¶ Moreover, we may indulge alterity ethics in closed and limited contexts that favor our train of thought and take that for a sufficient action. We may embrace the other or theorize about embracing and preserving alterity as ethics per se, but we may still live according to dialectical ‘alterity-blind’ institutions and practices. In such cases, we are either, consciously or subconsciously, acknowledging and maintaining theory/practice divisions, or we know that acting ethically toward the other entails more than theorizing about what form the most ethical relation should take. **Acting ethically demands sharing power and taking risks.** More problematically, the theoretical formulas may not function in the first place as **the roots of ‘unethical’ self-other relations cannot be automatically corrected by theoretically replacing modernist self**-centered by alterity-centered ethics. ¶ Furthermore, most of the writings about postmodernism—engage strenuous debates and often deploy elitist jargon, a practice that limits their accessibility and descriptive value. Very often philosophical and theoretical elitist debates alienate larger audiences and may even thrive at the expense of addressing concrete self-other transactions. To a certain degree, these debates are **inflated and divorced** from the stakes involved in political self-other lived transactions. **Once one crosses the threshold of speculating about self-other relations into considering them in light of indispensable concrete constituencies of race, gender, nationality, power grid, and other variables, cherished postmodern key terms—such as undecidability, alterity, and non-judgmentalism—become anomalous**. Hard lived realities demand resolutions and involve recalcitrant stakes. To solely dwell on the linguistic/discursive as the origin of self/other imbalance is to overlook the complex and intricate relations among discourses and actions. To put it differently, there has to be some mutual trafficking between metaphysics and lived realities, but **one cannot be reduced to the other in any straight predictable manner**. Nor are their relations reducible to cause-effect ones where Western Metaphysics’ privileging the subject and reducing the other/object is the causer, while racism, sexism, and colonial exploitation are the effects. This does not deny that there exists a ‘cause-effect’ relation between thought and lived realities, however. ¶ Alterity-centered postmodernism shows how modernist epistemology has failed to establish self-other relations as basically ethical by relegating the other to the status of a hierarchically inferior object or difference. But the downside to such critique is the transformation of the modernist individual/self into postmodernist subject. The postmodernist subject may not be more than a node or a surface/cite constructed by linguistic, economic and media systems. Thus, **the ethical turn toward alterity loses its halo when one considers the diminutive role played by human agency and intentionality**. Emphasizing the negative side of constructivism—being constructed by external or upper systems—postmodernism glosses over the subjects’ other various roles in sustaining and continuing, sometimes disrupting, dominant epistemological, economic and political systems. In other words, modernist subjects are primarily products of metaphysically pre-ordained itineraries **sidestepping other senses such as being a subject by initiating and performing actions by choice.** If subject primarily means subjected to, the ethics, responsibility and obligations, all become paradoxical. ¶ Furthermore, Levinas’s dictum to pre-ontologically encounter alterity makes sense; he thinks that the ethical should, or actually does, precede the ontological. But practically, such divisions may be divisions of convenience rather than of actuality as if the political and ethical belonged to different modes of living. I think that we do not need to submit to modernist disciplinary divisions of convenience nor do we need to separate the ethical from the political or from the ontological. I believe that ethics is not a formula or a prescription we choose to apply or we choose to leave behind. Ethics is intrinsic to action. Levinas’s move, however, has to be contextualized. It is his desire to remove self other relations from under modernist epistemological reductions and pragmatic/utilitarian arrangements that he wants to go back to a pure self-other encounter—before self-other dialectics. He wants to encounter the other before reductive logic moves in. Yet **such a move ends in an impasse**. Leaping back into the pre-ontological stems from Levinas’s ontological or epistemological consciousness. The irony is that one just cannot exit the ontological and still use its structures and vocabularies. Still, Levinas’s ethical dictum exposes the working of unconscious ethnocentrism or conscious bias in our self-other relations, systems and existence, unless we always foreground alterity. Consequently, alterity ethics is both a meta-ethical argument, or for some it constitutes a ‘moral principle,’ or a basic revelation about our human conditions: We are always in relation to—indebted to—the other. We may choose to elide such a realization, but we cannot change it.

### They Say: “Threat Reps Bad”

#### Policing China threats reproduces enmity — specific analysis of individual risks is key.

Callahan 05 — William Callahan, Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics, 2005 (“How to understand China: the dangers and opportunities of being a rising power,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31, Accessible Online via Subscribing Institutions to JSTOR, Accessed On 04-14-2016)

Although 'China threat theory' is ascribed to the Cold War thinking of foreigners who suffer from an enemy deprivation syndrome, the use of containment as a response to threats in Chinese texts suggests that Chinese strategists are also seeking to fill the symbolic gap left by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was the key threat to the PRC after 1960. Refutations of 'China threat theory' do not seek to deconstruct the discourse of 'threat' as part of critical security studies. Rather they are expressions of a geopolitical identity politics because they refute 'Chinese' threats as a way of facilitating the production of an America threat, a Japan threat, an India threat, and so on. Uniting to fight these foreign threats affirms China's national identity. Unfortunately, by refuting China threat in this bellicose way - that is by generating a new series of threats - the China threat theory texts end up confirming the threat that they seek to deny: Japan, India and Southeast Asia are increasingly threatened by China's protests of peace.43

Moreover, the estrangement produced and circulated in China threat theory is not just among nation-states. The recent shift in the focus of the discourse from security issues to more economic and cultural issues suggests that China is estranged from the 'international standards' of the 'international community'. After a long process of difficult negotiations, China entered the WTO in December 2001. Joining the WTO was not just an economic or a political event; it was an issue of Chinese identity.44 As Breslin, Shih and Zha describe in their articles in this Forum, this process was painful for China as WTO membership subjects the PRC to binding rules that are not the product of Chinese diplomacy or culture. Thus although China enters international organisations like the WTO based on shared values and rules, China also needs to distinguish itself from the undifferentiated mass of the globalised world. Since 2002, a large proportion of the China threat theory articles have been published in economics, trade, investment, and general business journals - rather than in international politics, area studies and ideological journals as in the 1990s. Hence China threat theory is one way to differentiate China from these international standards, which critics see as neo-colonial.45 Another way is for China to assert ownership over international standards to affirm its national identity through participation in globalisation.46

Lastly, some China threat theory articles go beyond criticising the ignorance and bad intentions of the offending texts to conclude that those who promote China threat must be crazy: 'There is a consensus within mainland academic circles that there is hardly any reasonable logic to explain the views and practices of the United States toward China in the past few years. It can only be summed up in a word: "Madness" \47 Indians likewise are said to suffer from a 'China threat theory syndrome'.48 This brings us back to Foucault's logic of 'rationality' being constructed through the exclusion of a range of activities that are labelled as 'madness'. The rationality of the rise of China depends upon distinguishing it from the madness of those who question it. Like Joseph Nye's concern that warnings of a China threat could become a self-fulfilling prophesy, China threat theory texts vigorously reproduce the dangers of the very threat they seek to deny. Rather than adding to the debate, they end up policing what Chinese and foreigners can rationally say.

Conclusion

The argument of this essay is not that China is a threat. Rather, it has examined the productive linkages that knit together the image of China as a peacefully rising power and the discourse of China as a threat to the economic and military stability of East Asia. It would be easy to join the chorus of those who denounce 'China threat theory' as the misguided product of the Blue Team, as do many in China and the West. But that would be a mistake, because depending on circumstances anything - from rising powers to civilian aircraft - can be interpreted as a threat. The purpose is not to argue that interpretations are false in relation to some reality (such as that China is fundamentally peaceful rather than war-like), but that it is necessary to unpack the political and historical context of each perception of threat. Indeed, 'China threat' has never described a unified American understanding of the PRC: it has always been one position among many in debates among academics, public intellectuals and policymakers. Rather than inflate extremist positions (in both the West and China) into irrefutable truth, it is more interesting to examine the debates that produced the threat/opportunity dynamic.

### They Say: “Threat Construction Bad”

#### No impact — threat construction doesn’t cause conflict.

Kaufman 9 — (Prof Poli Sci and IR – U Delaware, ‘9 (Stuart J, “Narratives and Symbols in Violent Mobilization: The Palestinian-Israeli Case,” Security Studies 18:3, 400 – 434)

Even when hostile narratives, group fears, and opportunity are strongly present, war occurs only if these factors are harnessed. Ethnic narratives and fears must combine to create significant ethnic hostility among mass publics. Politicians must also seize the opportunity to manipulate that hostility, evoking hostile narratives and symbols to gain or hold power by riding a wave of chauvinist mobilization. Such mobilization is often spurred by prominent events (for example, episodes of violence) that increase feelings of hostility and make chauvinist appeals seem timely. If the other group also mobilizes and if each side's felt security needs threaten the security of the other side, the result is a security dilemma spiral of rising fear, hostility, and mutual threat that results in violence. A virtue of this symbolist theory is that symbolist logic explains why ethnic peace is more common than ethnonationalist war. Even if hostile narratives, fears, and opportunity exist, severe violence usually can still be avoided if ethnic elites skillfully define group needs in moderate ways and collaborate across group lines to prevent violence: this is consociationalism.17 War is likely only if hostile narratives, fears, and opportunity spur hostile attitudes, chauvinist mobilization, and a security dilemma.

### They Say: “Aff Evidence Suspect”

#### Our knowledge of China is accurate—their authors have flawed information.

**Chan 4** —(Steve, UCB Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science, “Extended Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait: Learning from Rationalist Explanations in International Relations”, Asian Affairs, Vol 31, No. 3 (Fall, 2004), 10/17/12, atl)

Rationalist interpretations do not imply that people are omnipotent in their ability to procure and process information. We know all too well that people are subject to a variety of cognitive and perceptual errors (for example, Jervis 1976; Levy 1997; Kahneman and Tversky 2000; Tversky and Kahneman 1977). This recognition of limits to rationality, however, hardly warrants general attributions of naiveté , even stupidity, to government leaders. On the contrary, it seems sensible to start from the premise that officials know their counterparts far better than scholars may wish to acknowledge. Washington, Beijing, and Taipei, for instance, invest enormous time, effort, and resources in trying to gain an accurate understanding of each other. Academics have a hard time claiming any special insight or unique source of wisdom, whether it is based on mastery of the other side's language, intimate familiarity with its culture, or access to timely and sensitive information with restricted distribution. If anything, they are usually at a considerable disadvantage on these scores when compared to diplomats, intelligence analysts, and even journalists and business people. Indeed, academics in fields such as history and political science typically operate in the realm of common knowledge, outdated information, and mundane data. This confession in turn implies that at least for some of us, our individual and collective forte lies with the analysis of persistent empirical patterns and the formulation of general models of foreign policy conduct.

### They Say: “Epistemology First”

#### Epistemological debate is irrelevant and fails to create knowledge. Action is essential and inevitable.

Friedrichs 9 — Jorg, Oxford politics lecturer, “From positivist pretense to pragmatic practice: Varieties of pragmatic methodology in IR scholarship. International Studies Review 11(3): 645–648)

As Friedrich Nietzsche ([1887] 1994:1; cf. Wilson 2002) knew, the knower isstrangely unknown to himself. In fact, it is much morehazardous to contemplate theway how we gain knowledge than to gain such knowledge in the ﬁrst place. This is not to deny that intellectuals are a narcissistic Kratochwil lot, with a penchant for omphaloskepsis. The typical result of their navel-gazing, however, is not increased self-awareness. Scholars are more likely to come up with ex-post-facto rationalizations of how they would like to see their activity than with accurate descriptions of how they go about business. As a result, in science there is a paradoxical divide between positivist pretenseand pragmatic practice. Many prominent scholars proceed pragmatically in gen-erating their knowledge, only to vest it all in a positivist cloak when it comes topresenting results. In the wake of Karl Popper (1963), fantasies about ingeniousconjectures and inexorable refutations continue to hold sway despite the muchmore prosaic way most scholars grope around in the formulation of their theo-ries, and the much less rigorous way they assess the value of their hypotheses. In proposing pragmatism as a more realistic alternative to positivist idealiza-tions, I am not concerned with the original intentions of Charles Peirce. Theseare discussed and enhanced by Ryto¨ vuori-Apunen (this forum). Instead, Ipresent various attempts to make pragmatism work as a methodology for IR scholarship. This includes my own preferred methodology, the pragmaticresearch strategy of abduction. As Fritz Kratochwil and I argue elsewhere, abduction should be at the center of our efforts, while deduction and induction areimportant but auxiliary tools (Friedrichs and 2009).Of course, one does not need to be a pragmatist to proceed in a pragmatic way. Precisely because it is derived from practice, pragmatic commonsense is a sold as the hills. For example, James Rosenau (1988:164) declared many yearsago that he coveted ‘‘a long-held conviction that one advances knowledge most effectively by continuously moving back and forth between very abstract and very empirical levels of inquiry, allowing the insights of the former to exert pressurefor the latter even as the ﬁndings of the latter, in turn, exert pressure for the for-mer, thus sustaining an endless cycle in which theory and research feed on eachother.’’ This was shortly before Rosenau’s turn to postmodernism, while he wasstill touting the virtues of behaviorism and standard scientiﬁc requisites, such asindependent and dependent variables and theory testing. But if we take his state-ment at face value, it appears that Rosenau-the-positivist was guided by a sort of pragmatism for all but the name. While such practical commonsense is certainly valuable, in and by itself, it does not qualify as scientiﬁc methodology. Science requires a higher degree of methodological awareness. For this reason, I am not interested here in pragma-tism as unspoken commonsense, or as a pretext for doing empirical researchunencumbered by theoretical and methodological considerations. Nor am I con-cerned with **pragmatism as an excuse for staging yet another epistemological debate**. Instead, I am interested in pragmatism as an instrument to go about research with an appropriate degree of epistemological and methodologicalawareness. Taking this criterion as my yardstick, the following three varieties of pragmatist methodology in recent IR scholarship are worth mentioning: theory synthesis, analytic eclecticism (AE), and abduction.Theory synthesis is proposed by Andrew Moravcsik (2003), who claims that theories can be combined as long as they are compatible at some unspeciﬁedfundamental level, and that data will help to identify the right combination of theories. He does not explicitly invoke pragmatism but vests his pleading in apositivist cloak by using the language of theory testing. When looking closer,however, it becomes apparent that his theoretical and methodological noncha-lance is far more pragmatic than what his positivist rhetoric suggests. Moravcsiksees himself in good company, dropping the following names: Robert Keohane,Stephen Walt, Jack Snyder, Stephen Van Evera, Bary Buzan, Bruce Russett, John O’Neal, Martha Finnemore, and Kathryn Sikkink. With the partial excep-tion of Finnemore, however, none of these scholars explicitly links his or herscholarship to pragmatism. They employ pragmatic commonsense in theirresearch, but devoutly ignore pragmatism as a philosophical and methodologicalposition. As a result, it is fair to say that theory synthesis is only on a slightly higher level of intellectual awareness than Rosenau’s statement quoted above. Analytic eclecticism, as advertized by Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, links acommonsensical approach to empirical research with a more explicit commit-ment to pragmatism (Sil and Katzenstein 2005; Katzenstein and Sil 2008).The 7 Even the dean of critical rationalism, Karl Popper, is ‘‘guilty’’ of lapses into pragmatism, for example when hestates that scientists, like hungry animals, classify objects according to needs and interests, although with the impor-tant difference that they are guided in their quest for ﬁnding regularities not so much by the stomach but ratherby empirical problems and epistemic interests (Popper 1963:61–62). 646 Pragmatism and International Relations idea is to combine existing research traditions in a pragmatic fashion and thusto enable the formulation and exploration of novel and more complex sets of problems. The constituent elements of different research traditions are trans-lated into mutually compatible vocabularies and then recombined in novel ways.This implies that most scholars must continue the laborious process of formulat-ing parochial research traditions so that a few cosmopolitan colleagues will beenabled to draw upon their work and construct syncretistic collages. 8 In additionto themselves, Katzenstein and Sil cite a number of like-minded scholars such asCharles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Paul Pierson, and Robert Jervis. 9 The ascription isprobably correct given the highly analytical and eclectic approach of these schol-ars. Nevertheless, apart from Katzenstein and Sil themselves none of these schol-ars has explicitly avowed himself to AE.My preferred research strategy is abduction, which is epistemologically asself-aware as AE but minimizes the dependence on existing research traditions.The typical situation for abduction is when we, both in everyday life and as socialscientists, become aware of a certain class of phenomena that interests us for somereason, but for which we lack applicable theories. We simply trust, although we donot know for certain, that the observed class of phenomena is not random. Wetherefore start collecting pertinent observations and, at the same time, applyingconcepts from existing ﬁelds of our knowledge. Instead of trying to impose anabstract theoretical template (deduction) or ‘‘simply’’ inferring propositions fromfacts (induction), we start reasoning at an intermediate level (abduction). Abduction follows the predicament that science is, or should be, above all amore conscious and systematic version of the way by which humans have learnedto solve problems and generate knowledge in their everyday lives. As it iscurrently practiced, science is often a poor emulator of what we are able toachieve in practice. This is unfortunate because human practice is the ultimatemiracle. In our own practice, most of us manage to deal with many challenging situations. The way we accomplish this is completely different from**,** and far moreefﬁcient than, **the way knowledge is generated** according to standard scientiﬁc methods. If it is true that in our own practice we proceed not so much by induction or deduction but rather by abduction, then science would do well tomimic this at least in some respects. 10 Abduction has been invoked by numerous scholars, including Alexander Wendt, John Ruggie, Jeffrey Checkel, Martin Shapiro, Alec Stone Sweet, andMartha Finnemore. While they all use the term abduction, none has ever thor-oughly speciﬁed its meaning. To make up for this omission, I have developedabduction into an explicit methodology and applied it in my own research oninternational police cooperation (Friedrichs 2008). Unfortunately, it is impossi-ble to go into further detail here. Readers interested in abduction as a way toadvance international research and methodology can also be referred to my recent article with Fritz Kratochwil (Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009).On a ﬁnal note, we should be careful not to erect pragmatism as the ultimateepistemological fantasy to caress the vanity of Nietzschean knowers unknown tothemselves, namely that they are ingeniously ‘‘sorting out’’ problematic situa-tions. Scientiﬁc inquiry is not simply an intimate encounter between a researchproblem and a problem solver. It is a social activity taking place in communitiesof practice (Wenger 1998). Pragmatism must be neither reduced to the utility of results regardless of their social presuppositions and meaning, nor to the 8 Pace Rudra Sil (this forum), the whole point about eclecticism is that you rely on existing traditions to blendthem into something new. There is no eclecticism without something to be eclectic about. 9 One may further expand the list by including the international society approach of the English school (Ma-kinda 2000), as well as the early Kenneth Waltz (1959). 10 Precisely for this reason, abduction understood as ‘Inference to the Best Explanation’ plays a crucial role inthe ﬁeld of Artiﬁcial Intelligence. 647 The Forum fabrication of consensus among scientists. **Pragmatism as the practice of dis-cursive communities and pragmatism as a device for the generation of useful knowledge are two sides of the same coin**

### They Say: “Self Fulfilling Prophecy”

**No self-fulfilling prophecy — threat language prevents conflict.**

Rachman 96 **—** (Gideon Rachman, Asia editor of the Economist, ’96 (Washington Quarterly, “Containing China”, ln)

Let us start with the self-fulfilling prophecy. This argument, often advanced by Sinologists, stresses Chinese paranoia. For historical reasons, the Chinese leadership is said to be deeply suspicious of the outside world. It assumes that outsiders will inevitably try to frustrate growing Chinese prosperity and power, however that power is used. Objecting to Chinese threats, protesting about human rights abuses, meeting the Taiwanese, attempting to leave Hong Kong with workable, democratic institutions, using words like containment: any and all of this will simply be interpreted by China as a plot to undermine Chinese stability. It may well be that the Chinese think like this. So what? The point is to respond to Chinese actions, not to try to fathom Chinese thought processes. If policymakers insist on playing the psychologist, perhaps they should model themselves on B. F. Skinner, rather than Freud. In other words rather than trying to divine the sources of Chinese behavior by analyzing old traumas, they should concentrate on behavior modification. A basic tenet of behavior therapy is not to reward behavior that you wish to discourage: giving in to threats is not generally regarded as sound practice. Ah, reply some Sinologists, but the Chinese are different. China, in the words of Henry Kissinger, "tends to react with neuralgia to any perceived slight to its dignity." n7 Well, perhaps. But it is a myth that the Chinese never back down when put under pressure. There are recent examples that suggest the opposite. In February 1995, the Chinese gave considerable ground over intellectual property rights when threatened with sanctions by the United States. The Chinese released Harry Wu, the Chinese-American human rights activist, when it became clear that imprisoning him would gravely damage U.S.-Chinese relations. After its display of public fury over the Lee Teng-hui visit, China quietly returned its ambassador to Washington and moved to patch up relations with the United States, despite failing to extract a public promise that Lee would never again be granted a U.S. visa. China also seems likely to give substantial ground in negotiations over accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Believers in the self-fulfilling prophecy have got the argument the wrong way around. It is certainly true that American, and indeed Asian, policies toward China could be a lot better thought out. But the West is not the source of friction: the real sources of the current tensions are Chinese actions, particularly Chinese threats to use force to assert claims over Taiwan and the South China Sea. The Chinese insist that they have never been an expansionist power. But China has very expansive ideas of where its legitimate borders lie. Because weak Chinese governments have always been especially prickly on issues of sovereignty, instability after the death of Deng Xiaoping may only heighten Chinese assertiveness.

### They Say: “Reps Prior Question”

#### Prior questions are infinite — prioritizing action essential to marginalized groups.

Cochran 99 **—** Molly, Assistant Professor of International Affairs at Georgia Institute for Technology, “Normative Theory in International Relations”, 1999, pg. 272

To conclude this chapter, while modernist and postmodernist debates continue, while we are still unsure as to what we can legitimately identify as a feminist ethical/political concern, while we still are unclear about the relationship between discourse and experience**, it is** particularly **important** for feminists **that we proceed with analysis of** both **the material** (institutional and structural) as well as the discursive. This holds not only for feminists, but for all theorists oriented towards the goal of extending further moral inclusion in the present social sciences climate of epistemological uncertainty. **Important** ethical/**political concerns hang in the balance. We cannot afford to wait for the meta-theoretical questions to be conclusively answered**. Those answers may be unavailable. Nor can we wait for a credible vision of an **alt**ernative institutional order to appear before an emancipatory agenda can be kicked into gear. Nor do we have before us a chicken and egg question of which comes first: sorting out the metatheoretical issues or working out which practices contribute to a credible institutional vision. The two questions can and should be pursued together, and can be via moral imagination. Imagination can help us think beyond discursive and material conditions which limit us, by pushing the boundaries of those limitations in thought and examining what yields. In this respect, I believe international ethics as pragmatic critique can be a useful ally to feminist and normative theorists generally.

#### Prior questions eliminate empirical validity — problem-driven approaches are essential.

Owen 2 — (David, Southampton political theory reader, “Re-orienting International Relations: On Pragmatism, Pluralism and Practical Reasoning”, Millennium 31.3, SAGE)

Commenting on the ‘philosophical turn’ in IR, Wæver remarks that ‘[a] frenzy for words like “epistemology” and “ontology” often signals this philosophical turn’, although he goes on to comment that these terms are often used loosely.4 However, loosely deployed or not, it is clear that debates concerning ontology and epistemology play a central role in the contemporary IR theory wars. In one respect, this is unsurprising since it is a characteristic feature of the social sciences that periods of disciplinary disorientation involve recourse to reflection on the philosophical commitments of different theoretical approaches, and there is no doubt that such reflection can play a valuable role in making explicit the commitments that characterise (and help individuate) diverse theoretical positions. Yet, such a philosophical turn is not without its dangers and I will briefly mention three before turning to consider a confusion that has, I will suggest, helped to promote the IR theory wars by motivating this philosophical turn. The first danger with the philosophical turn is that it has an inbuilt tendency to prioritise issues of ontology and epistemology over **explanatory and/or interpretive power** as if the latter two were **merely a simple function of the former.** But while the explanatory and/or interpretive power of a theoretical account is not wholly independent of its ontological and/or epistemological commitments (otherwise criticism of these features would not be a criticism that had any value), it is by no means clear that it is, in contrast, wholly dependent on these philosophical commitments. Thus, for example, one need not be sympathetic to rational choice theory to recognise that it can provide powerful accounts of certain kinds of problems, such as the tragedy of the commons in which dilemmas of collective action are foregrounded. It may, of course, be the case that the advocates of rational choice **theory cannot give a good account of why this type of theory is powerful** in accounting for this class of problems (i.e., how it is that the relevant actors come to exhibit features in these circumstances that approximate the assumptions of rational choice theory) and, if this is the case, it is a philosophical weakness—but this does not undermine the point that, for a certain class of problems, **rational choice theory may provide the best account** available to us**.** In other words, while the critical judgement of theoretical accounts in terms of their ontological and/or epistemological sophistication is one kind of critical judgement, it is not the only or even necessarily the most importantkind. The second danger run by the philosophical turn is that because **prioritisation of ontology** and epistemology promotes theory-construction from philosophical first principles, it cultivates a theory-driven rather than problem-driven approach to IR. Paraphrasing Ian Shapiro, the point can be put like this: since it is the case that there is always a plurality of possible true descriptions of a given action, event or phenomenon, the challenge is to decide which is the most apt in terms of getting a perspicuous grip on the action**,** event or phenomenon in question given the purposes of the inquiry; yet, from this standpoint, ‘theory-driven work is part of a **reductionist program’** in that it ‘dictates always opting for the description that calls for the explanation that flows from the preferred model or theory’.5 The justification offered for this strategy rests on the mistaken belief that it is necessary for social science because general explanations are required to characterise the classes of phenomena studied in similar terms. However, as Shapiro points out, this is to misunderstand the enterprise of science since ‘whether there are general explanations for classes of phenomena is a question for social-scientific inquiry, not to be prejudged before conducting that inquiry’.6 Moreover, **this strategy easily slips into the promotion of the pursuit of generality over that of empirical validity.** The third danger is that the preceding two combine to encourage the formation of a particular image of disciplinary debate in IR—what might be called (only slightly tongue in cheek) ‘the Highlander view’—namely, an image of warring theoretical approaches with each, despite occasional temporary tactical alliances, dedicated to the strategic achievement of sovereignty over the disciplinary field. It encourages this view because the turn to, and prioritisation of, ontology and epistemology stimulates the idea that there can only be one theoretical approach which gets things right, namely, the theoretical approach that gets its ontology and epistemology right. This image feeds back into IR exacerbating the first and second dangers, and so a potentially vicious circle arises.